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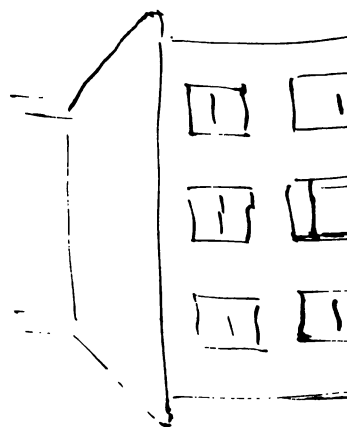
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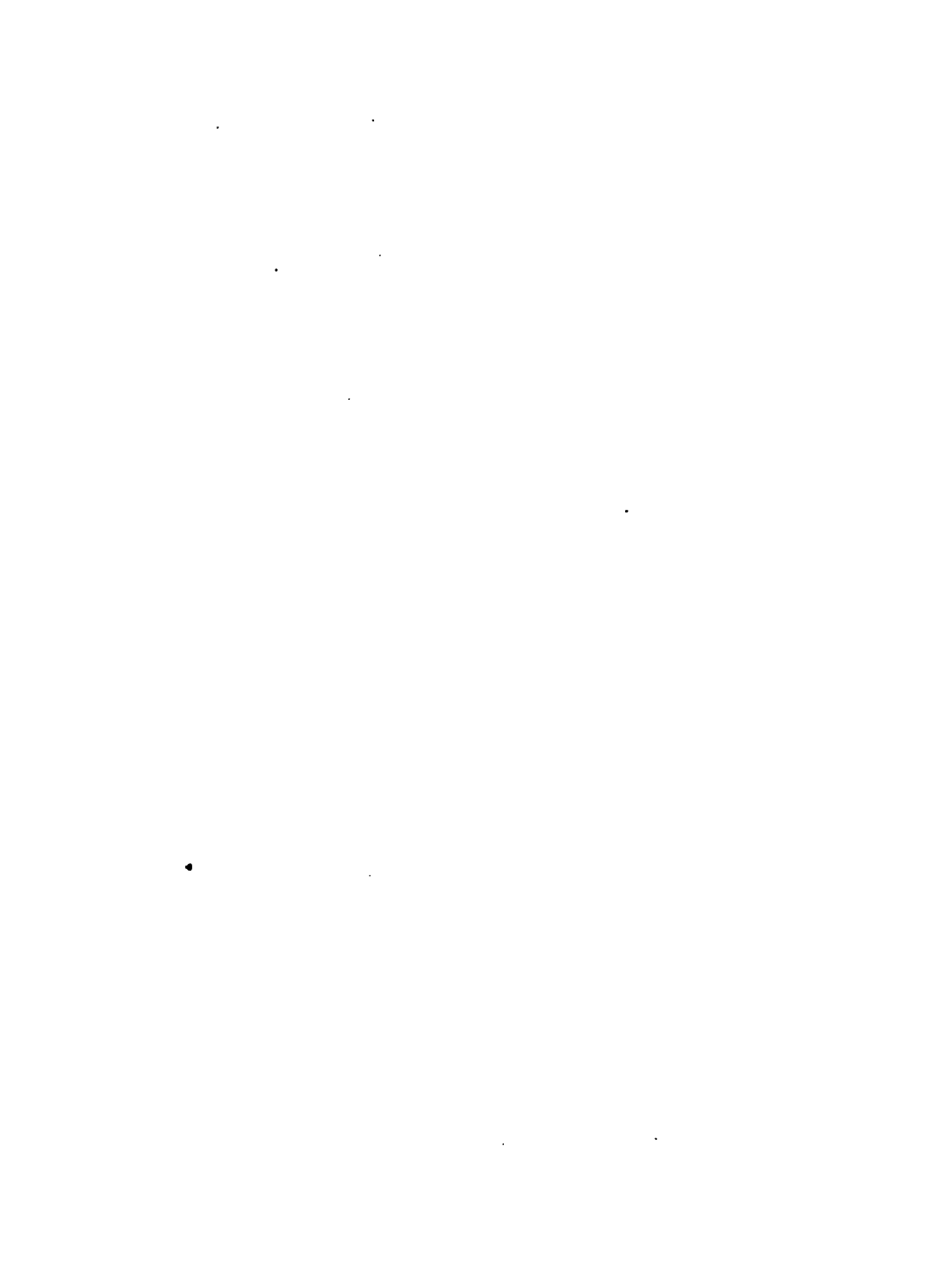




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THE LAME DEVIL.

THE LAME DEVIL.

AN EXPURGATED EDITION OF
LE SAGE'S DIABLE BOITEUX.



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THE LAME DEVIL.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT DEVIL THE DEVIL UPON TWO STICKS IS. WHERE, AND BY WHAT CHANCE, DON CLÉOFAS LÉANDRO PÉREZ ZAMBULLO MADE ACQUAINTANCE WITH HIM.

A NIGHT of the month of October covered with thick darkness the celebrated city of Madrid. Already the citizens, retired to their houses, had left the streets free to those lovers who wished to sing their pains or their pleasures under the balconies of their mistresses. In short, it was near midnight when Don Cléofas Léandro Pérez Zambullo, a student of Alcala, came hastily out of a dormer window. He was endeavouring to preserve his life by attempting to escape from three or four bullies. Although alone against them, he bravely defended himself; and had only taken to flight, because they had wrested his sword from him in the scuffle. They pursued him for some time over the roofs, but he eluded their search, being favoured by the darkness. He walked towards a light which he perceived at a distance, and which, dim as it was, was to him a light-house in so critical a juncture. After having run the risk, more than once, of breaking his neck, he arrived near a garret from whence proceeded the rays of this light, and he went in by a window, as much overjoyed as a pilot who sees his vessel safe in port after having been threatened with shipwreck. At first he looked all around, and was much surprised at finding no one in this garret, which seemed to him an apartment odd enough; he began to examine it with much

attention. He saw a copper lamp hung to the ceiling, books and papers in confusion on a table, a globe and compasses on one side, phials and quadrants on the other; which made him conclude there lived below some astrologer, who came to make his observations in this recess.

He was reflecting on the danger from which his good fortune had saved him, and was considering within himself whether he should remain there till morning, or if he should take some other measures, when he heard a long sigh heaved near him. He at first imagined it was some phantom of his disturbed imagination, an illusion of night; therefore, without stopping thereat, he continued his reflections.

But having heard the sigh a second time, he no longer doubted its being real, and although he saw no one in the room, he did not fail to call out, 'Who the devil sighs here?'

'Tis I, Signior Scholar,' as soon answered a voice, which had something very extraordinary in it. 'I have been these six months in one of these corked phials. There lives in this house a skilful astrologer, who is a magician. 'Tis he that, by the power of his art, keeps me shut up in this close prison.'

'You are then a spirit,' said Don Cléofas, a little startled at the novelty of the adventure.

'I am a demon,' answered the voice. 'You are come here very opportunely to release me from slavery. I languish in idleness, for I am the most active and industrious devil in hell.'

These words caused some fright to Signior Zambullo; but as he was naturally courageous, he composed himself, and said in a resolute tone to the spirit, 'Signior Devil, inform me, if you please, what rank you hold among your brethren,—if you are a noble or plebeian demon.'

'I am a devil of importance,' answered the voice, 'and one of the most reputable in either world.'

'Might you be,' resumed Don Cléofas, 'the devil they term Lucifer?'

'No,' answered the spirit; 'that is the devil of mountebanks.'

'Are you Uriel?' returned the scholar.

'O fie!' hastily interrupted the voice; 'he is the patron of merchants, of tailors, of butchers, of bakers, and of other third-rate thieves.'

'You are perhaps Beelzebub,' said Léandro.

'Are you jesting?' answered the spirit; 'he is the demon of duennas and ushers.'

'That surprises me,' said Zambullo. 'I thought Beelzebub one of the greatest personages of your fraternity.'

'He is one of the most insignificant,' replied the demon. 'You have no just ideas of our hell.'

'You must then be,' resumed Cléofas, 'Leviathan, Belphegor, or Astaroth.'

'Oh, as for those three,' said the voice, 'they are devils of the first order; they are spirits of the Court. They enter into the councils of princes, instigate the ministers, form factions, excite insurrections in states, and light up the torches of war. These are no ragamuffins, like the first you mentioned.'

'Ah! tell me, I pray,' said the scholar, 'what is the office of Flagel?'

'He is the soul of chicanery and the spirit of the bar,' replied the demon. 'Tis he who composed the precedents of sheriffs and notaries; he inspires the barristers, possesses the counsellors, and besets the judges. As for me, I have other employments. I make ridiculous matches; I join dotards to young girls, masters to their servant-maids, and girls of slender dowry to tender lovers who have no fortune. 'Tis I that have introduced into the world luxury, debauchery, games of chance, and chemistry. I am the inventor of carousals, of dancing, of music, of plays, and of all the new fashions of France. In a word, I am Asmodeo, surnamed the Crippled Devil.'

'What, then!' cried Don Cléofas, 'you are the famous Asmodeo, of which so glorious a mention is made in Agrippa and the Clavicula Salomonis? Ah! surely you have not told me all your pastimes; you have forgot the best of them. I know that you sometimes amuse yourself with cheering unfortunate lovers.'

'That is true,' said the spirit. 'I reserved that for the last. I am the demon of luxury, or, to speak in a more honourable manner, the god Cupid; for the poets have given me this pretty name, and these gentlemen have represented me to great advantage. They say that I have gilded wings, a fillet over my eyes, a bow in my hands, a quiver full of arrows on my shoulders, and with all, ravishing beauty. You shall soon see which it is, if you please to set me at liberty.'

'Signior Asmodeo,' replied Léandro Pérez, 'I have for a long time been entirely devoted to you, as you well know. The danger I have just encountered can bear witness to it. I am very glad to meet with an opportunity of serving you ; but the vessel which contains you is, without doubt, enchanted. In vain I should endeavour to uncork or break it. Thus I do not very well know in what manner to release you. I have no great practice in these kinds of deliverances ; and between you and I, if, cunning devil as you are, you cannot extricate yourself, how can a pitiful mortal accomplish it?'

'Mankind have that power,' answered the demon. 'The phial in which I am detained is but a simple glass bottle, easy to break. You have only to take it and throw it on the ground, and I shall immediately appear in a human shape.'

'In that case,' said the scholar, 'the thing is easier than I imagined. Inform me, therefore, in which phial you are. I see a great number alike, and I cannot distinguish it from the rest.'

'It is the fourth from the window,' answered the spirit. 'Although the impression of a magic seal be on the cork, the bottle will certainly break.'

'That is sufficient,' resumed Don Cléofas. 'I am ready to do as you wish. There is only one trifling difficulty which deters me. When I have done you the service in question, I fear I shall have to pay the piper.'

'No accident shall happen to you,' replied the demon. 'On the contrary, you shall be satisfied with my gratitude. I will inform you of whatever you may wish to know ; I will apprise you of all that is passing in the world ; I will disclose to you the foibles of mankind ; I will be your tutelar demon, and more enlightened than the genius of Socrates. I intend to make you far wiser than that great philosopher. In a word, I devote myself to you with my good and bad qualities, the latter of which will not be less useful to you than the former.'

'Those are fair promises,' replied the scholar, 'but you Messieurs Devils are accused of not being very religious in performing what you promise us.'

'This accusation is not without foundation,' replied Asmodeo. 'The greater part of my brethren make no bones of breaking their word. As for me, besides my not being able to pay you



too well for the service I expect from you, I am a slave to my oaths, and I swear to you, by all that makes them inviolable, that I will not deceive you.'

Young Zambullo was much taken with this last promise. To hasten the accomplishment of it, he immediately took the phial in which the spirit was, and without any more considering what might be the consequence he let it fall hard. It flew into a thousand pieces, and overflowed the floor with a blackish liquor, which evaporated by degrees, and converted itself into smoke, which, dissipating all at once, displayed to the astonished scholar the figure of a man in a cloak, about two feet and a half high, supported by two crutches. This little monster had goat's legs, a long face, a pointed chin, a black and yellow complexion, and a very flat nose. His eyes, which seemed very small, resembled two live coals; his extremely wide mouth was adorned with two paltry red whiskers, edged with two unparalleled lips. This charming Cupid had his head wrapt up in a kind of turban of red crape, crested with a tuft of cock's and peacock's feathers. He wore about his neck a wide collar of yellow cloth, on which were drawn several models of necklaces and ear-pendants. He was dressed in a short white satin robe, girded round the middle with a large band of vellum, marked with talismanic characters. On this robe were seen painted several kinds of stays for ladies, well adapted for the neck; scarves, party-coloured aprons, and new-fashioned head-dresses, some more extravagant than the others.

But all this was nothing in comparison to his cloak, the bottom of which was also of white satin.

There were a number of figures painted on it in Indian ink, with so much freedom and expression, that it was natural to suppose the devil had a hand in it. On one side was seen a French lady practising new airs in her glass; on the other some Italian cavaliers were playing the guitar under the balconies of their mistresses. In one was seen a Turkish Signior surrounded by all the women of his seraglio. In another, an English gentleman, who was very gallantly presenting a pipe and porter to his lady.

There were likewise to be seen players remarkably well represented; some of them, animated with sprightly joy, were filling their hats with pieces of gold and silver, and others only

playing upon honour, casting sacrilegious eyes to Heaven, and gnawing their cards in despair. In short, there were as many curious things to be seen on it, as on the wonderful buckler which the god Vulcan made at the prayer of Thetis; but there was this difference between the works of these two cripples, that the figures on the buckler had no reference to the exploits of Achilles, whereas those on the cloak were as many lively representations of all that is done in the world by the instigation of Asmodeo.

CHAPTER II.

SEQUEL OF THE DELIVERANCE OF ASMODOEO.

THIS demon, perceiving that his appearance did not much prepossess the scholar in his favour, said to him, smiling:—‘Well, Signior Don Cléofas Léandro Pérez Zambullo, you behold the charming God of Love, this sovereign ruler of hearts. What think you of my air and beauty? Are not the poets excellent painters?’

‘To be candid,’ replied Don Cléofas, ‘they are rather flattering. I believe you did not appear in this shape before Psyche.’

‘Oh! no,’ answered the Devil, ‘I borrowed that of a French coxcomb, in order to make myself immediately beloved. It is necessary to cover vice with a specious appearance, otherwise it would not please. I assume all shapes at pleasure, and it was in my power to have shown myself to you in a more beautiful, fantastic form; but as I have devoted myself entirely to you, and do not intend to conceal anything from you, I wished you to behold me in a shape, conformable to the opinion that is entertained of me and of my works.’

‘I am not surprised,’ said Léandro, ‘at your being somewhat ugly. Please to pardon the expression; the connections we are going to have together require candour. Your features correspond closely with my ideas of you, but pray inform me why you are lame?’

'It is,' answered the demon, 'owing to my having had formerly in France a dispute with Pillardoc, the devil of lucre. The matter in question was, which of us should possess one young Manceau, who came to Paris to seek his fortune. As he was an excellent piece, and a young man of great abilities, we warmly contested the possession of him. We fought in the middle region of air. Pillardoc was the strongest, and threw me to the earth in the same manner that Jupiter, as the poets say, hurled Vulcan. The similarity of these adventures occasioned my companions to surname me, the lame devil. They gave me this nickname in a jest, which I have retained ever since. Nevertheless, maimed as I am, I can yet go at a fine rate. You shall witness my activity.'

'But,' added he, 'let us put an end to this conversation. Let us hasten to get out of this garret. The magician will soon come here to work at the immortality of a beautiful sylph. Should he surprise us he would not fail to replace me in a bottle, and he might perhaps put you there too. Let us first throw the pieces of the broken phial out of the window, that the enchanter may not perceive my emancipation.

'Should he find it out, after our departure,' said Zambullo, 'what would be the consequence?'

'What would be the consequence?' answered the cripple; 'it is evident you never read the book of *Compulsion*. Were I to hide myself at the extremities of the earth, or of those regions which fiery salamanders inhabit; even though I should descend to the gnomes, or to the deepest abyss of the seas, I should not be screened from his resentment. He would make such potent conjurations, that all hell would tremble. In vain I should strive to disobey him. I would be obliged to appear before him in spite of my teeth, to undergo the punishment he might think proper to inflict on me.'

'In that case,' resumed the scholar, 'I very much fear that our connection will not be of long duration. Will this formidable necromancer soon discover your flight?'

'That is what I do not know,' replied the spirit, 'because we do not know what is to happen.'

'What!' cried Léandro Pérez, 'are the demons ignorant of futurity?'

'Certainly,' replied the devil; 'those who depend on us in

that instance are egregious dupes. It is that which makes fortune-tellers talk so much nonsense, and impose so much on women of quality who go to consult them respecting future events. We only know the past and the present. I am ignorant therefore if the magician will soon perceive my absence, but I hope he will not. There are many phials like that in which I was confined ; he will not suspect that one is wanting. I will further tell you, that I am in his laboratory, like a law book in a financier's library ; he does not think of me, and if he does, he never does me the honour of conversing with me, for he is the haughtiest enchanter that I know of. Ever since he has kept me prisoner, he has not condescended to speak a single word to me.'

'What a man !' said Don Cléofas. 'What have you done then to incur his hatred ?'

'I thwarted one of his plans,' replied Asmodeo ; 'there was a vacancy in a certain academy ; he intended one of his friends should have it ; I would have it given to another. The magician made a talisman, composed of the most potent characters of the cabala ; I, on the other hand, put my man under the protection of a great minister, whose name carried it from the talisman.'

Having thus said, the demon gathered all the pieces of the broken phial, and threw them out of the window. 'Signior Zambullo,' then said he to the scholar, 'let us make our escape as quick as possible ; take hold of the end of my cloak and fear nothing.'

However dangerous this step appeared to Don Cléofas, he chose to take it, rather than remain exposed to the resentment of the magician, and he clung to the devil as well as he could, who immediately carried him away.

CHAPTER III.

TO WHAT PLACE THE CRIPPLED DEVIL TRANSPORTED THE SCHOLAR,
AND THE FIRST THINGS HE SHOWED HIM.

ASMODEO did not boast of his agility without reason. He cleft the air like an arrow let fly with violence, and perched on the steeple of *St Salvador*.

As soon as he alighted, he said to his companion, 'Well, Signior Léandro, when they say of an uneasy vehicle, that it is the devil's own carriage, is it not indeed an erroneous manner of speaking?'

'I have just experienced the falsehood of it,' politely answered Zambullo: 'I can vouch that this vehicle is easier than a litter, and withal so expeditious, that one has not time to be tired on the road.'

'Now,' resumed the demon, 'you do not know why I bring you here. I intend to show you all that is passing in Madrid; and as I mean to begin with this part, I could not choose a more proper situation for the execution of my plan. I am going by my diabolical power to take the roofs from the houses, and, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, the interior will be visible to your eyes.'

At these words he simply extended his right arm, and immediately all the roofs disappeared. The scholar then beheld, as at noonday, the insides of the houses, in the same manner, says * Louis Velez de Guevara, that one sees the inside of a pie from which the crust has been taken.

This sight was too novel not to attract his whole attention; he saw everywhere, and the variety of things which surrounded him was such as to entertain his curiosity for a long time.

'Signor Don Cléofas,' said the devil, 'this medley of objects which you behold with pleasure is, in fact, very agreeable to contemplate. But this is but a frivolous amusement; I must render it useful to you; and, in order to give a thorough knowledge of human life, intend to explain what all those persons

* The author of *The Spanish Devil upon Two Sticks*.

you see are doing. I will discover to you the motives of their actions, and reveal to you even their most secret thoughts.

'Where shall we begin? Let us first observe, in that house to the right, that old man who is counting gold and silver. He is an avaricious citizen. His coach, which he got almost for nothing at the sale of a nobleman's effects, is drawn by two sorry mules, which are in his stables, and which he feeds conformably to the law of the twelve tables; that is to say, he every day gives each of them one pound of barley. He treats them as the Romans used to do their slaves. Two years ago he arrived from the Indies loaded with ingots, which he has converted into specie. Admire this old fool! with what satisfaction he surveys his riches! he cannot be cloyed with them. But attend, at the same time, to what is passing in a little parlour in the same house. Do you observe two young fellows with an old woman?'

'Yes,' answered Cléofas, 'they are apparently his children.'

'No,' resumed the devil, 'they are his nephews, who are to be his heirs, and who, impatient to divide his spoils, have privately sent for a sorceress, to learn from her when he is to die.'

'I perceive in the same house two scenes laughable enough: one is a superannuated coquette, who is going to bed, after having left her hair, her eyebrows, and her teeth on her toilette table; the other, a gallant of threescore, who is just returned from making love. He has already unfixed his eye, and his artificial whiskers, with his wig that covered a bald head. He is waiting for his valet to take off his arm and his wooden leg, in order to go to bed with the remainder.'

'If I may trust my eyes,' said Zambullo, 'I see in that house a stout young girl, extremely handsome; how delicate her air!'

'Well,' resumed the cripple, 'this young beauty, that strikes you so much, is the eldest sister of the gallant who is going to bed. One may say that she is fellow to the old coquette that lodges with her. Her shape, which you admire, is a machine that has exhausted mechanism; her neck and haunches are artificial. However, as she affects to be a young girl, there are two young gentlemen who contend for her favour. They even came to blows for her; the madmen! I think I see two dogs fighting for a bone.'

'Let us amuse ourselves with the concert that is held near there in a cit's house, after the family have done supper. They are singing cantatas; an old civilian has composed the music, and the words are by an Alguasil,* who plays the gentleman; a prig, who composes verses for his amusement and the punishment of others: a pair of bagpipes and a spinet, form the accompaniment. A great he-fellow of a chanter with a clear voice sings tenor, and a young girl with a hoarse voice sings bass.'

'The diverting sight!' said Don Cléofas, laughing. 'If one had a mind purposely to give a burlesque concert, it could not be so well accomplished.'

'Look a little beyond,' continued he, 'and observe in a parlour, that hypocrite who is rubbing himself with hog's lard, in order to go to a meeting of sorcerers, which is held this night between St Sebastian and Fontabara. I would carry you there immediately, were I not apprehensive of being known by the demon who presides at this ceremony.'

'This devil and you are not good friends, then?' said the scholar.

'No, faith,' replied Asmodeo, 'tis the same Pillardoc of whom I told you. The rogue would betray me; he would not fail to inform the magician of my flight.'

'You perhaps have had some other dispute with this Pillardoc?'

'You have hit it,' replied the demon. 'Two years ago we had a fresh quarrel about a young Parisian, who was going to settle in the world. We each of us claimed the disposal of him: he wished to make him a clerk; I would have made him a man of fortune; our companions made him a rascally monk, in order to end the contest: after that they reconciled us, we embraced each other, and from that time we have been mortal enemies.'

'Let alone that fine assembly,' said Don Cléofas; 'I am not in the least curious to be there; let us rather continue to examine what presents itself to our view. What is the meaning of those sparks of fire that proceed from that cellar?'

'It is one of the most foolish works of man,' answered the devil. 'The personage, who in that cellar is near a burning

* An Alguasil is what a Commissaire is in France, only he wears a sword.

furnace, is an alchymist ; the fire consumes by degrees his rich patrimony, and he will never find what he is seeking for. Between us, the philosopher's stone is only a fine chimera, which I myself have framed, in order to sport with the human mind that passes the limits which have been prescribed to it.'

'I perceive in the house facing the apothecary's,' said Zambullo, 'a man who is rising and dressing himself in a hurry.'

'Plague!' answered the spirit, 'tis a physician who is called up on business of emergency. He has been sent for by a prelate who, during an hour he has been in bed, has coughed two or three times. Direct your attention farther to the right, and endeavour to discover in a garret, a man who is walking in his shirt, by the gloomy light of a lamp.'

'I have it,' said the scholar, 'by the same token that I could take an inventory of the furniture in that garret. There are only a truckle bed, a stool, and a table; and the walls seem to be besmeared with black.'

'The personage who lodges so high,' resumed Asmodeo, 'is a poet : and what appears to you black, are tragic verses of his composition, with which he has hung his chamber, being obliged, for want of paper, to write his poems on the wall.'

'To see him agitated and act in such a manner as he walks,' said Don Cléofas, 'I imagine he is composing some work of importance.'

'You are not wrong,' replied the cripple; 'he yesterday put the finishing stroke to a tragedy entitled the *Universal Deluge*. He cannot be reproached with not having observed the unity of place, as the whole action passes in Noah's ark. I assure you it is a most excellent piece ; the beasts all speak in it like doctors. He intends dedicating it, and has been at work these six hours at the epistle dedicatory ; he is now at the last phrase of it. It may be said that this dedication is a masterpiece ; all the moral and political virtues, all the praises that can be given to a man, illustrious by his ancestors and in himself, are not spared. No author ever lavished so much incense.'

'To whom does he intend addressing so magnificent an eulogium ?' asked the scholar.

'He does not yet know,' answered the devil ; 'he has left the name blank. He is looking out for some rich nobleman, who

may be more liberal than those to whom he has already dedicated other books; but people who pay for epistles dedicatory are very scarce now-a-days; that is a failing of which noblemen have got the better, and thereby have done the public very great service, it having been overwhelmed with paltry productions of genius, the greater part of books formerly having been only made for the proceeds of the dedications.

'Speaking of epistles dedicatory,' added the demon, 'I must relate a singular anecdote. A lady of the Court, having permitted a work to be dedicated to her, wished to see the dedication before it was printed; and not finding herself extolled enough to her liking, she took the trouble of composing one of her own, and sent it to the author to put at the head of his work.'

'It seems,' cried Léandro, 'that there are thieves getting into a house by a balcony.'

'You are not deceived,' said Asmodeo; 'those are house-breakers; they are getting in at a banker's. Let us watch them, and see what they will do. They are searching the counting-house; they are rummaging everywhere; but the banker has been beforehand with them, he set off yesterday for Holland with all the money he had in his coffers.'

'I am curious,' resumed the scholar, 'to know what that man is about that I see in a morning-gown and nightcap; he is writing with application, and there is near him a little black figure that guides his hand as he writes.'

'The man who is writing,' answered the devil, 'is a registrar, who, to oblige a very grateful guardian, is altering a decree made in favour of a ward; and the little black figure that is guiding his hand is Griffael, the demon of registers.'

'This Griffael,' replied Don Cléofas, 'only holds this employment *per interim*; as Fligel is the spirit of the bar, the registers, methinks, must belong to his department.'

'No,' answered Asmodeo, 'the registers have been esteemed worthy of having their particular devil; and I swear to you that he has no employment besides. At the registrar's house lives a stout, lame bachelor, a relation, who has not his fellow in the world for buffoonery. Volumnius, so much extolled by Cicero for pungent jests, so replete with wit, was not so complete a jester. This bachelor, called, for distinction in Madrid, Bachelor *Donoso*, is sought by all the personages of the Court

and city, who give entertainments ; it is, who shall have him ! He has a peculiar talent of enlivening the guests ; he is the ornament of the table, and he every day goes to dine at some great house, whence he does not return until two in the morning ; he is to-day at the Marquis d'Alcaniza's, where he only went by chance.'

'How by chance ?' interrupted Léandro.

'I am going to explain myself,' answered the devil. 'There were this day about noon at the bachelor's door, five or six coaches, that came for him from different lords. He took the pages into his apartment, and said to them, taking a pack of cards, "My friends, as I cannot gratify your masters all at once, and as I am unwilling to give the preference to any one, these cards shall decide it. I will go dine with the king of clubs."'

'What intention,' said Don Cléofas, 'can that gentleman have on the other side of the street, who is sitting on the threshold ?'

Answered Asmodeo, 'Tis a young Castilian, who affects perfect love ; he intends, through pure gallantry, like the lovers of old, to pass the night at the door of his mistress. He thrums every now and then a guitar, singing some ballads of his own composing ; but his infanta, in bed on the second floor, bemoans, listening to him, the absence of his rival.

'Let us go on to this new building which contains two separate dwelling-houses, one of which is occupied by the proprietor, that old cavalier who sometimes is walking in his apartment, and then throws himself into an easy-chair.'

'I suppose,' said Zambullo, 'that he is contemplating some grand project ; if one may judge from the riches that glisten in his house, he must be a nobleman of the first rank.'

'He is, however, but a *Contador*,' replied the demon ; 'he has grown old in some very lucrative employments ; he is worth four millions. As he is not without uneasiness with respect to the means he has made use of in the acquisition of them, and finding himself on the eve of going to give an account in the other world, he has grown scrupulous : he is thinking of building a monastery. He flatters himself, that after so good an action his conscience will be at rest. He has already obtained permission to found a convent ; but he intends to put there only such devotees as are wholly chaste, sober, and of great humility. He is very much perplexed about the choice of them.'

'Oh, oh !' cried the scholar, 'I hear the air resound with cries and lamentations. Has there happened any misfortune?'

'This is the affair,' said the spirit: 'Two young gentlemen were playing at cards together in that tennis court where you see so many lamps and candles burning; they got suddenly angry, laid hold of their swords, and have mortally wounded each other. The eldest is married, and the other is an only son; they are going to resign their breath. The wife of the one, and the father of the other, apprized of this fatal accident, are just arrived; they fill the neighbourhood with their cries. "Unhappy child," said the father, addressing his son, who cannot hear him, "how often have I admonished you to relinquish play! how often have I told you it would cost you your life! I declare it is not my fault that you perish miserably." On her side, the wife is distracted; although he has lost in play all she had brought him in marriage, although he has sold all the jewellery she had, and even her wearing apparel, she is inconsolable for his loss; she curses the cards which are the occasion of it, she curses the inventor of them, she curses the tennis court and all those who inhabit it.'

'I very much pity those who are possessed with the desire of play,' said Don Cléofas. 'Their minds are frequently in a horrid situation. Thank heaven I am not tainted with that vice.'

'You have another which is full as bad,' replied the demon. 'I wonder at mankind; their own defects appear trifles to them, whereas they view those of others with a microscope.'

'I must again,' added he, 'show you some distressing scenes. Behold in a house two steps from the tennis court, that stout man stretched on a bed. It is an unfortunate prebendary, who has just fallen into an apoplexy. His nephew and grandniece, far from giving him any assistance, let him expire, and are laying hold of his most valuable effects, which they are going to carry to receivers of stolen goods; after which they will be at leisure to weep and lament him.'

'Do you take notice of two men they are burying close by? They are brothers. They were sick of the same disorder; but they regulated themselves differently. The one had a blind confidence in his physician; the other let nature take her course. They are both dead; the first for having taken all his

doctor's prescriptions ; the latter, for refusing to take anything.'

'That is very perplexing,' said Léandro. 'Ah! what then must a poor sick person do?'

'That is what I cannot teach you,' answered the devil. 'I well know that there are good remedies, but I do not know if there are good physicians. Let us shift the scene,' continued he ; 'I have more diverting ones to show you. Do you hear a rout in the street? A lady of sixty has this morning married a gentleman of seventeen. All the laughers in the neighbourhood are gathered together to celebrate the nuptials by a noisy concert of basons, shovels, and kettles.'

'You told me,' interrupted the scholar, 'that you made ridiculous matches; however, you have no hand in that one.'

'No, indeed,' replied the cripple ; 'I was not able to make it. I was not at liberty ; but even if I had been, I would not have meddled with it.'

'Notwithstanding the noise of that burlesque serenade,' said Zambullo, 'I think another strikes my ear.'

'That which you hear in spite of the clatter,' answered the cripple, 'proceeds from a tavern, where there are a great Flemish captain, a French chanter, and an officer of the German guard, who are singing in *trio*. They have been at table ever since eight o'clock this morning, and each of them thinks that the honour of his nation depends on making the other two drunk.'

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT NEW THINGS DON CLÉOFAS SAW.

'LET us turn to another quarter,' continued Asmodeo ; 'let us survey new objects. Direct your sight to that mansion which is directly under us; you will there see a thing uncommon enough. 'Tis a man deeply in debt, who is sleeping very sound.'

'He must then be a person of quality,' said Léandro.

'Exactly,' said the demon. 'Tis a marquis worth a hundred

thousand ducats a year, and whose expenditure, nevertheless, exceeds his revenue; but that does not disturb his rest. On the contrary, when he is pleased to owe a great deal to a merchant, he imagines that this merchant is much obliged to him. "Tis from you," said he the other day to a draper, "'tis from you that I intend henceforth to buy on credit; I give you the preference."

Whilst this marquis is so quietly tasting the sweets of sleep, of which he deprives his creditors, behold, at the top of the house, a man who is at work in a closet full of books and manuscripts.'

'Perhaps,' said Zambullo, 'it is the steward, who is employed at seeking some method of paying his master's debts.'

'Well done,' answered the devil; 'it is with that, indeed, that the stewards of this kind of masters amuse themselves. They are more intent upon taking advantage of the derangement of affairs, than in putting them in order. This, therefore, is not a steward whom you see: 'tis an author; the marquis lodges him in his house, in order to appear the patron of men of letters.'

'This author,' replied Don Cléofas, 'is apparently a great genius.'

'You shall determine that,' returned the devil. 'He is in the midst of a thousand volumes, and he is composing one in which he puts nothing of his own. He is pilfering in those books and manuscripts; and although he is only arranging and connecting his thefts, he has more vanity than a real author. Give your attention to that printer who is at work all alone in his printing-office. He sent away his journeymen three hours ago; he is going to spend the night in printing a book privately.'

'Ah! what work is it then?' said Léandro.

'It is a libel,' answered the demon. 'It proves that religion is preferable to the point of honour; that it is better to forgive than to punish an offence.'

'Ah, the rascal of a printer!' cried the scholar; 'he does well to print his infamous books in secret. The author had better not make himself known. I would be the first to cudgel him. Does religion forbid the preservation of honour?'

'Let us not enter into this discussion,' interrupted Asmodeo, with an arch smile. 'It appears you have derived great ad-

vantage from lessons of morality, which have been given you at Alcalá. I congratulate you thereon.'

'You may say what you please,' interrupted Don Cléofas in his turn; 'let the author of this ridiculous work make use of the fairest arguments in the world, I laugh at them. I am a Spaniard; nothing seems to me sweeter than revenge.'

'Cast your eyes beyond the printing-office, and observe what is doing in an apartment hung with musk-cloth.'

'I there see,' answered Léandro, 'five or six women, who are giving, as if in emulation, glass bottles to a kind of valet, and they seem to be furiously agitated.'

'They are devotees,' answered the cripple, 'who have great reason to be affected. 'There is in that apartment a sick inquisitor. This venerable personage, who is near thirty-five, is in bed in a different chamber from that in which those women are. Two of his dearest penitents watch him. One makes his broth, and the other at his pillow takes care to keep his head warm, and to cover his stomach with a covering composed of fifty sheep-skins.'

'What then is his disorder?' answered Zambullo.

'He has a cold in his head,' replied the devil, 'and it is to be feared that it will fall on his lungs. Those other devotees whom you see in his ante-chamber, are flocking with prescriptions at the news of his indisposition. One brings for the cough syrups of jujubes, of althea, of coral, of thussilage; the other, to preserve his reverence's lungs, is loaded with syrups of longuevie, of fluellin, of amaranth, and elixir of Garus; another, to fortify the head and stomach, has got balm tea, candied cinnamon, divine and treacle waters, with essences of nutmeg and ambergris. This one comes to offer anardine and bezoardic decoctions; that one, tinctures of pinks, of coral, of mille-flowers, of sun-flowers, and of emerald. All these zealous penitents praise to the inquisitor's valet the things which they bring. They take him aside by turns, and each of them, putting a ducat in his hand, whispers to him, "Laurent, my dear Laurent, contrive that my bottle may have the preference."

'Faith,' cried Don Cléofas, 'I must acknowledge that these inquisitors are lucky fellows.'

'I warrant you,' replied Asmodeo, 'I almost envy their lot; and as Alexander said one day that he would wish to have been

Diogenes, had he not been Alexander, I would willingly say, that were I not a devil, I should like to be an inquisitor.'

CHAPTER V.

OF THE PRISONERS.

'BEFORE I begin this detail, take notice of the turnkeys, who are at the entrance of these dismal abodes. The poets of antiquity have placed but one Cerberus at the gate of their hell ; there are many more here, as you see. The turnkeys are men who have lost every spark of humanity. The most malevolent of my brethren could scarcely replace one of them. But I perceive,' continued he, 'that you view with horror those chambers, in which the only furniture is truckle beds. These dreary cells appear to you like so many tombs. You are justly astonished at the misery you see here, and you lament the lot of those whom justice detains there ; however, they are not all alike to be pitied, which we are now going to examine.

'In the first place, there are in that large room on the right two men in those poor beds ; one of them is a tavern-keeper accused of having poisoned a stranger that died in his tavern the other day. It is alleged that the quality of the wine killed the deceased ; the landlord avers that it is the quantity, and the court will be on his side, for the stranger was a German.'

'Which is in the right, the tavern-keeper, or his accusers ?' said Don Cléofas.

'The case is problematical,' replied the devil. 'It is very true that the wine was adulterated ; but faith, the German gentleman drank so much of it that the judges may in conscience liberate the tavern-keeper. The second prisoner is an assassin by profession, one of those villains termed *valientes*, and who, for four or five pistoles, very obligingly lend their assistance to all those who will go to that expense, in order to get rid of any one privately. In a closet,' continued he, 'near those men, is a famous sorceress, who, it is said, has the power of doing im-

possibilities. By the power of her art, say they, old dowagers find young men who love them equally, husbands become attached to their wives, and coquets absolutely in love with rich gentlemen who are devoted to them. But there is nothing more false than all that ; she possesses no other secret but that of persuading that she has one, and of living comfortably by this belief. The holy office is reclaiming that wretch, who may probably be burnt at the first act of faith. Under the closet is a dungeon, which is the lodging of a young tavern-keeper.'

'Another landlord !' cried Leandro. 'Is this kind of people going then to poison everybody ?'

'This one,' returned Asmodeo, 'is not in the same situation. They arrested this poor fellow the day before yesterday, and the Inquisition have likewise the charge of him. I will in few words tell you the reason of his detention.

'An old soldier, arrived to the rank of serjeant in his company by his courage, or rather by his patience, came recruiting to Madrid. He asked for lodgings at a tavern, and they told him that there were indeed rooms unoccupied, but they could not give him one, because there came every night in the house a spirit, that treated strangers very ill, when they had the temerity to lodge there. This news did not deter the serjeant ; "put me into any chamber you please," said he, "give me a candle, some wine, and some tobacco, and make yourself easy about the rest. Your spirits have some respect for soldiers who have grown grey in the service."

'They showed the serjeant into a room, as he appeared so resolute, and brought him all he had asked for. He began to drink and smoke. It was already past midnight, and the spirit had not yet interrupted the profound silence which reigned in the house ; one would have said that he actually respected this new guest ; but between one and two, the blade, all at once, heard a horrible noise, like irons, and presently saw a frightful phantom enter his chamber clothed in black, and wound round with iron chains. Our smoker was not intimidated by this apparition ; he drew his sword, advanced towards the spirit, and gave a clumsy stroke with the flat part of it on his head.

'The phantom, not used to find such dauntless guests, gave a shriek, and remarking that the soldier was preparing to renew

it, he prostrates himself very humbly before him, saying, "Pray, Signior serjeant, give me no more of it; have pity on a poor devil, who throws himself at your feet to implore your clemency. I conjure you by St Jago, who was, like yourself, a great bully." "If thou wish to preserve thy life," answered the soldier, "thou must tell me who thou art, and speak sincerely, or I will cleave thee in two, as the knights of old used to hew the giants they met with.' The spirit, seeing whom he had to deal with, took the alternative of confessing all. "I am," said he to the serjeant, "the head-waiter of this tavern; my name is William, I love Juanilla, who is the only daughter of the house, and I am not disagreeable to her; but as her father and mother have in view an alliance more creditable than mine, in order to compel them to take me for their son-in-law the little girl and I have agreed, that I should every night act the part I now do. I wrap myself up in a long black cloak, and hang to my neck the jack chain, with which I run through the whole house, from the cellar to the garret, making all the noise you have heard; when I am at my master's chamber-door, I stop, and cry out—*Do not expect me to let you rest, until you have married Juanilla to your head-waiter.*

"Signior serjeant," continued William, "you well know that I tell you the truth; I know, that after this confession you can ruin me, by informing my master of what has passed, but if you will serve me, instead of doing me that ill turn, I promise you that my gratitude" "Ah! what service can you expect of me?" interrupted the soldier. "You have only," replied the young man, "to say to-morrow, that you have seen the spirit, and that it frightened you so much" "How the plague, frightened!" again interrupted the blade, "you want Sergeant Annibal Antonio Quebrantador to go and say that he has been afraid? I had rather a hundred thousand devils had me." "That is not absolutely necessary," interrupted William in his turn; "and after all, it matters little in what manner you speak, provided you second my design. When I am married to Juanilla, and in business, I promise to regale you and your friends every day for nothing." "You are very enticing, master William," cried the blade: "you propose to me to assist in a roguish trick; the business is very serious;

but you go to work in a manner that makes me not think of the consequences. Go, continue to make a noise, and to give an account of it to Juanilla ; I undertake the rest."

'In fact the very next morning the serjeant said to the landlord and landlady, "I have seen the spirit; I have conversed with him; he is very reasonable, 'I am,' said he to me, 'the great-great-grandfather of the master of this tavern. I had a daughter, whom I promised to the father of the grandfather of his waiter: nevertheless, slighting my promise, I married her to another and died soon after; I suffer since that time, and undergo the punishment of my perjury, and I shall not be at rest, until one of my race be married to one of William's family; I therefore return every night to this house. However, in vain I require them to marry Juanilla and the chief waiter; the son of my grandson turns a deaf ear, as well as his wife; but tell them, if you please, Signior serjeant, that if they do not what I desire immediately, I will soon make use of harsh methods with them; I will torment both of them in a strange manner. '"

'The landlord is a weak man; he was staggered at this discourse; and the landlady, still weaker than her husband, thinking she already saw him appear at her heels, consented to this marriage, which took place the next day. William, soon after, set up in another part of the city. Serjeant Quebrantador did not fail to visit him frequently, and the young tavern-keeper, through gratitude, at first gave him wine as he wanted it, which pleased the blade so much, that he brought all his friends to this tavern; he even enlisted his men at it, and there intoxicated his recruits.

'But at length the landlord grew weary of drenching so many thirsty gullets. He told his sentiments thereon to the soldier, who, without thinking that he actually exceeded the agreement, was so unjust as to term William ungrateful. This last replied, the other rejoined, and the conversation ended with some strokes of the flat part of the sword, which the tavern-keeper received. Several that were passing took the cit's part, Quebrantador wounded three or four of them, and would not have stopped there, had he not been suddenly attacked by a gang of archers, who arrested him as a disturber of the peace; they led him to prison, where he has declared all I now tell you, and on his deposition justice has also laid hold of William. The father-

in-law requires the marriage to be annulled, and the holy office, being informed that William has property, intends taking cognizance of the affair.'

'Dear me!' said Don Cléofas, 'the holy Inquisition is very alert. As soon as there is the least probability of deriving an advantage'

'Softly,' interrupted the cripple, 'beware of inveighing against that tribunal; it has spies everywhere; it is informed even of things that have never been spoken; I myself dare not mention it without trembling.'

'Above the unfortunate William, on the first chamber to the left, there is a gentleman to a duchess, who has been robbed of a large diamond. He will be put on the rack to-morrow, where he will be tortured until he confess having been guilty of the theft; whereas the person who committed it is a favourite waiting-woman, whom no one dares suspect.

'Ah! Signior Asmodeo,' said Léandro, 'assist this gentleman I entreat you; his innocence interests me in his behalf; snatch him by your power from the unjust and cruel punishments that await him.'

'He merits not your attention, Signior scholar,' interrupted the devil; 'can you request me to oppose an iniquitous action, and to prevent an innocent man from perishing? It is asking an attorney not to ruin a widow or an orphan.

'Oh! then, if you please,' added he, 'do not require me to do anything contrary to my interests, unless you derive some considerable advantage from it. Besides, were I to wish to deliver this prisoner, could I do it?'

'How then,' returned Zambullo, 'have you not the power of taking a man out of prison?'

'No, indeed,' replied the cripple. 'Had you read *Enchiridion*, or *Albert the Great*, you would know that I cannot, any more than my brethren, set a prisoner at liberty. I myself, were I so unfortunate as to be in the talons of justice, could not extricate myself but by bribery. In the next room, on the same side, lodges a surgeon, convicted of having, through jealousy, bled his wife after the manner of *Seneca*. He has been on the rack to-day; and after having confessed the crime of which he was accused, he declared that for ten years past he has made use of a very novel method of acquiring practice. He

used to wound passengers in the night with a bayonet, and make his escape by a back door to his house; meantime the wounded made outcries that brought the neighbours to his assistance; the surgeon ran then himself like the rest, and finding a man weltering in his blood, he had him brought to his shop, where he dressed him with the same hand with which he had stabbed him.

‘Although this cruel surgeon have made this confession, and deserves a thousand deaths, he yet flatters himself that mercy will be shown him, and that may probably happen, for he is related to the Infanta’s Rocker; besides, I’ll tell you that he has a marvellous water, which he alone knows how to prepare; a water which has the virtue of whitening the skin, and of making, out of an ancient face, a youthful countenance; and this incomparable water is a fountain of youth to three ladies of the palace, who have combined to save him. He relies so much on their influence, or if you please on his water, that he is gone quietly to sleep, in hopes that when he wakes he will receive the agreeable news of his enlargement.’

‘I perceive on a truckle bed in the same room,’ said the scholar, ‘another man, who, it seems to me, is sleeping very sound; his business cannot be very bad.’

‘It is very delicate,’ replied the devil; ‘this cavalier is a Biscayen gentleman, who has grown rich by a shot of a carbine, and in this manner: About a fortnight ago, hunting with his eldest brother, who enjoyed a considerable income, he unfortunately killed him as he was shooting at some partridges.’

‘A lucky *quiproquo* for a younger brother!’ cried Don Cléofas, laughing.

‘Yes,’ resumed Asmodeo; ‘but the relations who want to usurp the succession of the deceased, are prosecuting his murderer, whom they accuse of having done the deed in order to become sole heir of his family. He made himself a prisoner, and he seems so much afflicted at his brother’s death that no one can suppose he intended taking away his life.’

‘And has he indeed nothing to reproach himself with on that score but his awkwardness?’ resumed Léandro.

‘No,’ replied the cripple, ‘he had no bad intention; but when an eldest son possesses all the property of a family, I do not advise him to hunt with his younger brother.’

‘Remark well those two youths, who, in a little recess near the Biscayen gentleman, are conversing as jovially as though they were at liberty. They are two real knaves; one of them in particular will be able one day or other to give the public an account of his pranks; it is the one who wears a brown velvet doublet, and a plume in his hat. Not three months ago he was, in this city, page to the Count d’ Onate, and he would still have been in that nobleman’s service but for a piece of knavery, which is the cause of his imprisonment, and which I will relate to you.

‘This youth, named Domingo, received one day at the Count’s a hundred lashes, which the gentleman of the hall, alias the governor of the pages, had laid roughly on him, for a certain piece of dexterity that deserved it. He remembered that slight correction for a long time, and was determined to be revenged. He had remarked more than once that Signior Don Come, the name of the gentleman, washed his hands with orange-water, and rubbed his body with paste of pinks and jessamine; that he was more careful of his person than an old coquet; and that, in fact, he was one of those coxcombs who imagine that a woman cannot see them without loving them. This remark furnished him with a plan of revenge, which he communicated to a young waiting-maid in the neighbourhood, whom he had occasion for in the execution of his project, and whose friend he was so much that he could not become more so.

‘This waiting-maid, named Floretta, in order to be more at liberty to speak to him, made him pass for her cousin in the house of Donna Luziana, her mistress, whose father was then absent. The mischievous Domingo, after having instructed his feigned cousin what she had to do, went one morning into Don Come’s chamber, where he found this gentleman trying on a new coat, viewing himself with satisfaction in a glass, and seeming charmed with his person. The page pretended to admire this Narcissus, and said to him with feigned transport, “Truly, Signior Don Come, you have the look of a prince. I every day see noblemen richly dressed; however, notwithstanding their rich apparel, they have not your noble air. I do not know,” added he, “if, being your servant so much as I am, I view you with too much prepossession; but, candidly, I see no cavalier at Court whom you do not excel.” The usher smiled at this

discourse, which so agreeably flattered his vanity, and answered with affectation, "Thou dost flatter me, my friend, or thou must indeed love me, and thy friendship lends me graces which nature has denied me." "I do not think so," replied the flatterer; for every one speaks as advantageously of you as I do. I wish you had heard what one of my cousins, who waits on a girl of quality, told me yesterday."

"Don Come did not fail to ask what this cousin had said. "As how," replied the page, "she expatiated on the elegance of your shape, on the charms that pervade your whole person, and, what is much better, she told me confidentially that Donna Luziana her mistress takes delight in viewing you through her lattice, whenever you pass before her house." "Who can this lady be," said the usher, "and where does she live?" "What," answered Domingo, "you don't know that it is the only daughter of Colonel Don Fernando, our neighbour?" "Ah! I have it now," said Don Come; "I remember having heard a great deal of the fortune and beauty of this same Luziana; it is an excellent match. But is it possible that I can have attracted her attention?" "Do not doubt it," replied the page, "my cousin told me so; although a waiting-maid she is no liar, and I will answer for her as for myself." "In that case," said the usher, "I am very anxious to have some conversation with thy relation, and to interest her in my behalf, by some little presents, as is customary; and if she advise me to pay attention to her mistress, I will try my luck. Why not? I admit there be a distance between my rank and that of Don Fernando, but I am now a gentleman, and I have five hundred good ducats a year. More extraordinary marriages take place every day."

"The page strengthened his governor in his resolution, and procured him an interview with his cousin, who, finding the usher disposed to believe everything, assured him that her mistress had a liking for him. "She has often questioned me respecting you," said she to him; "and the answers I made her will not be to your disadvantage. In short, Signior usher, you may justly flatter yourself that Donna Luziana loves you in secret. Acquaint her boldly with your lawful intentions; show her that you are the most gallant, as you are the handsomest and portliest man in Madrid. Give her serenades above all; nothing will be more agreeable to her. On my side I will enhance your gal-

lantry to her, and I hope my good offices will not be useless to you."

'Don Come, transported with joy to see the waiting-maid enter so warmly into his interests, wearied her with embraces, and putting on her finger a ring of small value, which he had bought on purpose to present her with, "My dear Floretta," said he to her, "I only give you this diamond to get acquainted with you. I intend acknowledging by a more solid reward the services you will render me."

'It is impossible to be more satisfied than he was with his interview with the waiting-maid; and he not only thanked Domingo for having procured it, but presented him with a pair of silk stockings and some shirts trimmed with lace, promising him besides to let slip no opportunity of serving him. Afterwards, consulting him on what he had to do, "My friend," said he to him, "what is thy opinion? Wouldst thou advise me to begin by a passionate and sublime letter to Donna Luziana?"

"By all means," answered the page, "make her a declaration of love in a lofty style. I foresee she will not take it ill." "I think so, too," resumed the usher; "at any rate, I will begin with that." He immediately sat down to write, and after tearing at least twenty rough copies, he at length composed a *billet-doux*, at which he stopped. He read it to Domingo, who, having heard it with signs of admiration, undertook to deliver it to his cousin. It was conceived in these flowery and far-fetched terms:

"For a long time, charming Luziana, I have been burning with an ardent love for you, from public report, which every where celebrates your perfections. However, notwithstanding the flame which consumes me, I have not dared to venture any act of gallantry. But as it has come to my knowledge that you condescend to direct your attention to me, when passing before the lattice which hides your celestial beauty from the eyes of men; and also that, by an influence of your planet, very fortunate for me, you are inclined to wish me well, I take the liberty of asking your permission to consecrate myself to your service; if I am so fortunate as to obtain it, I abjure all ladies,—past, present, and to come.

"DON COME DE LA HIGUERA."

'The page and the waiting-maid did not fail to amuse themselves at Signior Don Come's expense, and to divert themselves

with his letter. They did not rest there ; they jointly composed a tender note, which the waiting-maid herself wrote, and which Domingo gave the usher next day as an answer from Donna Luziana. It contained these words :—

“ I am ignorant who could have informed you so well of my secret sentiments. It is a piece of treachery some one has been guilty of ; but I forgive them, as it is the cause of your informing me that you love me. Of all the men I see passing our street, you are the one I take most pleasure in beholding, and I am desirous you should be my lover. Perhaps I ought not to wish it, and much less to tell you so. If I have committed a fault, your merit makes me excusable.

“ DONNA LUZIANA.”

‘ Although this answer was rather too energetic for a colonel’s daughter, for the authors had not been so particular, the aspiring Don Come did not mistrust it ; he loved himself enough to imagine that a lady might lay aside propriety for him. “ Ah ! Domingo,” cried he, with an air of triumph, after having read aloud the fictitious letter, “ thou seest, my friend, if our neighbour be not caught. I shall soon be Don Fernando’s son-in-law, or I am not Don Come de la Higuera.”

“ There is no doubt,” said the rogue of a confidant, “ but you have made a terrible impression on this girl. But now I think of it, my cousin charged me to tell you that to-morrow at farthest it will be necessary for you to give a serenade to her mistress, in order to make her dotingly fond of your honour.”

“ That is my intention,” said the usher. “ Thou mayest assure thy cousin that I shall follow her advice, and that to-morrow, without fail, she shall hear in her street at midnight one of the most gallant concerts that ever was heard in Madrid.”

‘ In fact, he went to engage a skilful musician, and after having informed him of his intention, he intrusted him with the execution of it.

‘ Whilst he was busy about his serenade, Floretta, whom the page had acquainted with it, seeing her mistress in a good humour, said to her, “ Madam, I am preparing an agreeable amusement for you.”

‘ Luziana asked what it was.

“ Oh, indeed,” answered the waiting-maid, laughing as though she were mad, “ there is a great deal of it. An original, named

Don Come, governor of the Count d'Onate's pages, has taken it into his head to choose you for the sovereign mistress of his thoughts, and, that you may not be ignorant of it, intends to entertain you to-morrow night with an elegant concert of voices and instruments."

"Donna Luziana, who was naturally very lively, and who besides thought the usher's gallantry of no moment to her, far from being offended, anticipated the pleasure of hearing the serenade. Thus this lady, without knowing it, assisted in confirming Don Come in an error which she would have been displeased at, had she known it.

"In short, the next night two coaches appeared before Luziana's balcony, out of which came the gallant usher and his confidant, accompanied by six men, as well singers as musicians, who began their concert. It lasted a long while. They played a great number of new tunes, and sang several verses of songs, relative to the power of love to unite lovers of unequal conditions; and at every verse, which the colonel's daughter applied to herself, she laughed heartily.

"When the serenade was finished, Don Come sent the musicians home in the same coaches which had brought them, and remained in the street with Domingo, till such time as the prying folks whom the music had collected had withdrawn; after which he approached the balcony, where the waiting-maid, by her mistress's permission, said to him by a small window of the lattice, "Is it you, Signior Don Come?"

"Who asks me the question?" returned he in a soft voice.

"It is," answered the waiting-maid, "Donna Luziana, who wishes to know if the concert we have just heard is an effect of your gallantry?"

"It is," answered the usher, "but a specimen of the entertainments my love is preparing for this miracle of the age, if she will condescend to receive a lover's sacrifices on the altar of her beauty."

"At this figurative expression the lady was not a little desirous to laugh. She, however, refrained, and placing herself at the small window, said to the usher as gravely as she could, "It is evident, Signior Don Come, that you are no novice in gallantry. It is of you that gentlemen in love should learn to serve their mistresses. I am well pleased with your serenade,

and will remember it ; but," added she, " withdraw, we may be heard. Some other time we will have a longer conversation."

' Having thus said, she shut the window, leaving the usher in the street, much pleased with the favour which had been done him, and the page much surprised at seeing her act a part in this farce.

' This little entertainment, including coach hire and the prodigious quantity of wine drank by the musicians, cost Don Come a hundred ducats ; and two days after his confidant brought him into a fresh expense in the following manner. Having learned that on Midsummer night—a night so celebrated in this city—Floretta was to go, with other girls of her cast, *à la fiesta del Sotillo*,* undertook to give them an elegant breakfast at the usher's expense.

" ' Signior Don Come," said he, on Midsummer's eve, " you know what holiday to-morrow will be. I inform you that Donna Luziana intends being, at daybreak, on the banks of the Mançanarez to see the *Sotillo*. I do not think it requisite to say more to the Coripeus of gallant cavaliers. You will not neglect so fine an opportunity ; I am persuaded your lady and her company will be well regaled to-morrow."

" " I can answer for that," said his governor. " I thank thee for the information ; thou shalt see if I can take the ball on the bound."

' Actually, the next day, four of his valets, conducted by Domingo, and loaded with all kinds of cold meat, dressed differently, with a quantity of little loaves and bottles of delicious wine, arrived on the banks of the Mançanarez, where Floretta and her companions were dancing like nymphs at the break of day.

' They were not a little rejoiced when the page came to interrupt their light dances, and offer them a solid breakfast on Signior Come's behalf. They immediately sat down on the grass, and began to do honour to the banquet, laughing immoderately at the dupe who gave it, for Domingo's charitable cousin had not failed to let them into the secret.

' Whilst they were all in a jovial mood they saw the usher appear, mounted on a hack of the Count's stables, and richly

* A kind of dance peculiar to the Spaniards.

them. They heard him with eagerness, and the most trifling things he mentioned made on them a lively impression of grief or joy. As soon as he had finished his narration, he told them that he was come to offer them a part of his property, and he requested his father to work no longer. "No, son," said Gaffer James, "I like my trade, I will not quit it." "What, then," replied the banker, "is it not time for you to take rest? I do not propose to you to come and live with me at Madrid. I well know that a residence in a city would have no charms for you. I do not intend to disturb your quiet life; but at least, spare yourself a toilsome business, and live here comfortably as it is in your power." The mother backed the son's opinion, and James yielded. "Well, Francillo," said he, "in order to satisfy thee, I will work no more for all the inhabitants of the village. I will only mend my own shoes, and those of the curate, our good friend." After this agreement, the banker swallowed two fresh eggs they dressed for him, and then lay down by his father and went to sleep, with a satisfaction which only children of a good disposition are capable of realizing. The next morning Francillo left them a purse of three hundred pistoles, and returned to Madrid. But he was much surprised this morning to see Gaffer James appear suddenly at his house. "What brings you here, father?" said he. "Son," answered the old man, "I return thee thy purse; take back thy money; I will live by my trade; I am dying with ennui ever since I left off work." "Well, father," replied Francillo, "return to the village; carry on your business, but let it be only for your amusement. Carry back your purse, and do not spare mine." "Ah! what would you have me do with so much money?" returned Gaffer James. "Assist the poor with it," replied the banker. "Apply it as your curate shall advise you." The cobbler, satisfied with this answer, returned to Mediana.'

Don Cléofas heard not without pleasure the history of Francillo, and he was going to bestow all the praises due to this banker's good disposition, had not piercing cries that moment attracted his attention.

'Signior Asmodeo,' cried he, 'what is this terrible noise?'

'These cries which rend the air,' answered the devil, 'proceed from a house in which there are mad people confined:

they are hoarse with crying and singing. We are not far from that house.'

'Let us go and see these mad people immediately,' said Léandro.

'I consent,' replied the demon. 'I am going to give you this amusement, and inform you why they have lost their senses.' He no sooner had spoken, than he carried the scholar on *la Casa de los Locos*.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE CONFINED MAD PEOPLE.

ZAMBULLO surveyed all the cells with a prying eye, and after he had observed the insane men and women which they contained, the devil said to him, 'You behold all kinds of them ; there are of both sexes, some melancholy, others cheerful, some old, some young. I must now inform you why their brains are turned. Let's go from cell to cell, and begin with the men. The first that presents itself, and who seems raving, is a Castilian newsmonger, born in the heart of Madrid, a proud citizen, and more tenacious of the honour of his country than an ancient Roman. He became insane through mortification, having read in the gazette, that twenty-five Spaniards had let themselves be beat by a party of fifty Portuguese. He has for a neighbour a licentiate, who was so desirous of catching a benefice, that he has played the hypocrite at Court for ten years ; and despair at seeing himself always forgotten in the promotions has impaired his understanding ; but what is much in his favour, he thinks himself Archbishop of Toledo. If he is not really so, he at least has the pleasure of imagining that he is ; and I believe him the more so, as I consider his insanity as a pleasing dream, which will end only with his life, and that he will have to give no account in the other world of the use he has made of his revenues. The next madman is a ward ; his guardian made him pass for insane, with the intention of keeping his property

for ever. The poor lad has actually lost his wits through vexation at being confined. After the minor, is a schoolmaster, who came there for persisting in the search of the *paulo post futurum* of a Greek verb; and the fourth, a merchant, whose reason was not proof against the news of a shipwreck, after having had fortitude enough to withstand two failures he has made.

'The next,' continued the devil, 'is Signior Don Blas Desdichado, a gentleman of great merit. The death of his wife has brought him to the deplorable situation in which you now see him.'

'That surprises me,' said Don Cléofas. 'A husband deprived of his reason by the death of his wife! I did not think conjugal affection could go so far.'

'Not so fast,' interrupted Asmodeo. 'Don Blas is not become insane through grief for the loss of his wife; what has disturbed his mind is, that having no children he is obliged to return to the parents of the deceased fifty thousand ducats, which, in his contract of marriage, he acknowledges having received from her.'

'Oh! that's another affair,' replied Léandro. 'I am no longer surprised at his misfortune. Tell me, if you please, who is that young man that is jumping like a kid in the next apartment; and who every now and then stops and laughs heartily, holding his sides? He is a very merry madman.'

'Yes,' said the cripple, 'his insanity is occasioned by excess of joy. He was porter to a person of quality, and having been informed one day of the death of a rich contador, to whom he was sole heir, he was not proof against such pleasing news . . . his brain turned.'

'We are come to that stout lad who is playing the guitar, and accompanies it with his voice. He is a melancholy madman, a lover, whom the rigour of a lady has driven to despair, and whom it became necessary to confine.'

'Ah! how much I pity him,' said the scholar, 'permit me to deplore his misfortune, it may happen to any decent person. Were I smitten with a cruel beauty, I do not know but it might be my lot.'

'By that sentiment,' returned the demon, 'I know you to be a true Castilian. One must be born in the heart of Castille to be capable of loving to such a degree as to lose one's senses,

through mortification at not being able to please. The French are not so tender ; and if you wish to know the difference there is between a Frenchman and a Spaniard, in this matter, I have only to repeat to you the song this madman is singing, and which he has just now composed.

SPANISH SONG.

' Ardo y lloro sin sosiego ;
Llorando y ardiento tanto.
Que ni el llanto apaga el fuego ;
Ni el fuego consume el llanto.' *

In this manner speaks a Spanish gentleman when he is ill used by his mistress. And thus a Frenchman, in the like situation, complained within these few days :

FRENCH SONG.

' Th' ungrateful object of my love
Is deaf to all my prayers ;
Her cruel heart no sighs can move,
Nor is she soften'd by my tears.
Was ever mortal curs'd like me ?
The light, and ever-glorious sun,
Henceforth abandon'd will I shun,
And in the grave with Payen lie.'

' This Payen is probably a vintner ? ' said Don Cléofas.

' Certainly,' answered the devil. ' Let us continue the examination of the other madmen.'

' Let us rather pass on to the women,' replied Léandro ; ' I am eager to see them.'

' I am going to yield to your impatience,' returned the spirit ; ' but there are here two or three unfortunate men that I would be glad to show you in the first place ; you may derive some advantage from their misfortunes. Observe, in the cell adjoining that of the player on the guitar, that pale, emaciated visage, who is gnashing his teeth, and seems to wish to eat the iron bars which are at his window. 'Tis a respectable man, born under so unlucky a planet that, with all the merit in the world, notwithstanding his exertions for twenty years, he has not been

* ' I burn and weep incessantly, yet cannot my tears extinguish my flame, nor my flame consume my tears.'

able to get beforehand. He lost his reason at seeing an insignificant fellow of his acquaintance ascend in one day, by arithmetic, to the summit of fortune's wheel. The neighbour of this madman is an old secretary, whose noddle is cracked for not having been able to bear the ingratitude of a person at Court, whom he had served for sixty years. The zeal and fidelity of this servant cannot be sufficiently commended, who never sought a recompense; he was satisfied with the evidence of his services and assiduity; but his master, far from resembling Archelaus, King of Macedonia, who refused when one asked, and gave when nothing was required, died without rewarding him; he has only left him a sufficiency to pass the remainder of his life in misery and among the insane. I will take notice but of one more; 'tis he who, with his elbow on the window, appears absorbed in a deep reverie. In him you behold a Segnor Hidalgo de Tafallu, a little town of Navarre; he came to live at Madrid, where he put his fortune to a fine use. He had the mania of seeking the acquaintance of all the men of genius, and of entertaining them, there was nothing but feasting at his house every day; and although the authors, an ungrateful and impolite nation, ridiculed him while devouring his property, he was not satisfied until he had eaten his all with them.'

'Without doubt,' said Zambullo, 'he is become insane through regret at having so effectually ruined himself.'

'Quite the reverse,' replied Asmodeo; 'it is because he is not in a situation to continue in the same course. Let us now proceed to the women,' added he.

'How then,' cried the scholar, 'I only see seven or eight of them! There are less madwomen than I thought.'

'They are not all here,' said the demon, smiling; 'I will carry you presently, if you wish it, to another part of this city, where there is a great house quite full of them.'

'That is not necessary,' said Don Cléofas; 'I will stick to these.'

'You are in the right,' returned the cripple, 'these are almost all girls of distinction; you may easily perceive, from the neatness of their linen, that they cannot be of the lower class. I am going to inform you of the cause of their insanity.'

'In the first cell is the wife of a Corregidor, whose mind was disturbed by anger at being termed commoner by a lady of the

Court. In the second, lives the wife of the Treasurer General of the Council of the Indies; she became insane from spite at being obliged, in a narrow street, to back her carriage, in order to make way for that of the Duchess of Medina-celi. In the third resides a young widow of a tradesman's family, who lost her wits through regret at having missed a great nobleman whom she was in hopes of marrying. And the fourth is occupied by a girl of quality, named Donna Beatrix, whose misfortune I must relate to you.

'This lady had a friend, called Donna Mencia; they saw each other every day. A knight of the order of St Jago, a handsome and gallant man, got acquainted with them, and soon made them rivals. They warmly contested for his heart, which leaned towards Donna Mencia, so that this last became wife to the knight.

'Donna Beatrix, jealous of the power of her charms, conceived a violent indignation at not having had the preference, and, like a true Spaniard, she was nourishing at the bottom of her heart a violent desire of revenge, when she received a note from Don Jacinta de Romarate, another lover of Donna Mencia; and this gentleman informed her, that being as much mortified as she with the marriage of his mistress, he had formed the resolution of fighting the knight that had taken her from him. This letter was very agreeable to Donna Beatrix, who, desiring but the death of the sinner, only wished Don Jacinta to take away his rival's life. While she was waiting with impatience for so Christian-like a satisfaction, it happened that her brother, having had by chance a dispute with Don Jacinta, came to blows with him, and was twice run through the body, of which he died. It was Donna Beatrix's duty to prosecute her brother's murderer; however, she neglected this object, to give Don Jacinta time to attack the knight of St Jago, which evinces that women hold nothing in so high estimation as their beauty. Such was the conduct of Pallas, when Ajax profaned her temple; she wishes him first to assist her in being revenged for the decision of Paris. But, alas! Donna Beatrix, less fortunate than Minerva, did not taste the sweets of revenge: Romarate fell in fighting the knight; and this lady's regret at seeing her injury unpunished, has disturbed her reason.

'The two next madwomen are the grandmother of a Councillor, and an old marchioness. The first pestered her grandson

with her peevishness, who very politely placed her here to be rid of her. The other is a woman who was always vain of her beauty ; instead of growing old with a good grace, she wept incessantly at seeing her charms fall to ruin, and at length viewing herself one day in a faithful mirror, her brain turned.'

'So much the better for the marchioness,' said Léandro. 'In her disturbed state of mind she no longer perceives the change which time has effected in her.'

'No, indeed,' replied the devil ; 'far now from seeing on her front the marks of age, her complexion appears to her a compound of lilies and roses ; she sees the loves and graces around her : in a word, she thinks herself the goddess Venus.'

'Well,' returned the scholar, 'is she not happier in her insanity than to behold herself as she really is?'

'Most undoubtedly,' answered Asmodeo.

'But,' continued the devil, 'after having shown you the mad people that are, I must let you see those who deserve to be in confinement.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MATTER OF WHICH IS INEXHAUSTIBLE.

'LET us look towards the city, and whenever I discover any person worthy of being numbered with those who are here, I will give you their character. I already see one that I will not miss ; it is a bridegroom : eight days ago, hearing of the coquetry of a jilt whom he loved, he went to her abode in a rage, broke some of her furniture, threw the remainder out of the window, and the next day he married her.'

'A man of that cast,' said Zambullo, 'most undoubtedly deserves the first vacancy in this house.'

'He has a neighbour,' resumed the cripple, 'whom I do not find wiser than he ; it is a bachelor, forty-five years old, who has a competency, and who is going into the service of a nobleman. I perceive a civilian's widow ; the lady has fully com-

pleted her twelfth lustre ; her husband is just dead ; she is going to retire into a convent, in order, she says, that her reputation may be out of the reach of slander. I also discover two virgins, or, more properly speaking, two spinsters, fifty years old ; they are preferring their prayers to heaven, that it will please to call their father, who keeps them confined like minors ; they are in hopes that after his death they will find handsome men that will marry them from inclination.'

'Why not ?' said the scholar ; 'there are men of so odd a taste.'

'I agree with you,' answered Asmodeo ; 'they may find matches, but they ought not to flatter themselves with it : in that consists their madness.

'There is no country in which women do themselves justice respecting their age. About a month ago at Paris, a maiden of forty-eight years, and a wife of sixty-nine, went as evidences before a justice, in behalf of a widow of their acquaintance. The justice first interrogated the married woman, and asked her age : although she had her certificate of baptism written on her brow, she nevertheless declared boldly that she was only forty years old. After he had questioned her, he addressed himself to the maiden ; "And you, miss," said he to her, "how old are you ?" "Proceed to the other questions, Mr Justice," answered she : "that is not a fair one." "You do not consider it," returned he ; "don't you know that in law—" "Oh ! law has nothing to do with it," hastily interrupted the maiden : "pray what business has the law with my age ? it does not concern it." "But," said he, "I cannot take your deposition if your age be not in it ; it is a requisite circumstance." "If it be absolutely necessary," answered she, "look at me with attention, and note my age to the best of your judgment." The justice looked at her, and was polite enough to mark her down only twenty-eight. He then asked her if she had long known the widow. "Before her marriage," answered she. "I have then wrongly quoted your age," returned he, "for I have only allowed you twenty-eight years, and the widow has been married twenty-nine." "Well, then," cried the spinster, "write me down thirty ; I might have known the widow when I was only twelve months old." "That would not be regular," replied he ; "let us add a dozen." "By no means, if you please," said she ; "all that I can do to satisfy

the law is to add one year more ; but I would not put another month though my honour were concerned."

'As soon as these two deponents were gone from the justice's, the wife said to the spinster, "Do admire that simpleton who thinks us silly enough to tell him our precise age; it is enough, indeed, for it to be recorded in our parish registers, without his writing it on his papers, that everybody may know it. Would it not be very pleasing for us to hear them reading in full court, *Madame Richard sixty and so many years old, Miss Perinelle forty-five years old, depose so and so?* As for me, I laugh at the idea; I have suppressed full twenty years; you have done well to act in the same manner." "What do you mean by the same manner?" interrupted the maiden in a sharp tone. "Your most obedient, I am not above thirty-five years old at most." "Ah! my chicken," replied the other sarcastically, "who do you tell it to? I remember the time you were born; I speak of a long time ago; I recollect seeing your father; he was not young when he died, and it is near forty years since his death."

'I observe in a house,' continued the spirit, 'two men, who are not too rational: one is a young fellow of family, that can neither keep money, nor do without it. He has found out a good way of always having some: when he has plenty he buys books, and whenever he runs short, he gets rid of them for the half of what they cost him. The other is a droll painter, who takes ladies' likenesses; he is clever—he sketches correctly—he paints to admiration, and catches the resemblance, but he does not flatter, and he thinks he shall have great custom. *Inter stultos referatur.*'

'How, then,' said the scholar, 'you speak Latin!'

'Ought that to surprise you?' returned the devil. 'I speak all kinds of languages fluently: I understand Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, and yet I am not the vainer or more pedantic for it; I have that advantage over your *literati*.

'Observe in that great mansion to the left, a sick lady surrounded by several women, who are watching her. She is the widow of an opulent and famous architect, a woman infatuated with nobility. She has just made her will. She has immense property, which she bequeaths to persons of the first quality, who do not even know her; she leaves them legacies on account of their great names. She was asked if she did not intend

leaving something to a certain man who had done her some important services. "Alas! no," answered she, with a dejected air; "and I am sorry for it. I am not so ungrateful as to deny that I am much obliged to him; but he is a plebeian, his name would disgrace my will."

'It were wrong to forget a little woman who resides at the Licentiate's; she is so well convinced that she pleases the men, that she rates all who speak to her in the number of her lovers.'

'But let us come to a rich canon, that I see hard by there. He has a very singular weakness. If he lives frugally, it is not from mortification nor from temperance. If he keeps no carriage, it is not through avarice.'

'Why, then, does he husband his income?'

'In order to heap up money.'

'For what purpose; to give to the poor?'

'No; he buys with it pictures, valuable furniture, and jewels.'

'And you think that he means to enjoy them during his life?'

'You are mistaken; it is only to swell his inventory.'

'You certainly exaggerate,' interrupted Zambullo. 'Is there a man in the world of that stamp?'

'Yes, I tell you,' returned the devil; 'he has that foible. He takes delight in reflecting that his inventory will be admired. For instance, he has bought a handsome chest of drawers. He has it packed up and crammed into a store-room, in order that it may appear quite new to the brokers who may come to cheapen it after his death.'

'Let us pass on to one of his neighbours, whom you will not find less insane. It is an old bachelor, lately returned to Madrid from the Philippine Isles, with a rich inheritance left him by his father, who was auditor of the audience of Manilla. His conduct is extraordinary enough. He is to be seen all day long in the ante-chambers of the king and the prime minister. Do not take him for an ambitious person, who is soliciting some important office. He wishes for none, and he asks for nothing. What, then, you will say, he only goes there to make his court? Still less; he never speaks to the minister; he is not even known to him, nor does he wish to be.'

'What, then, is the object?'

'It is this; he wishes to appear to have credit.'

'A curious original!' cried the scholar, laughing heartily.

'It is giving one's self a great deal of trouble for little purpose. You are in the right to place him in the number of madmen worthy of being confined.'

'Oh,' replied Asmodeo, 'I am going to show you many others, whom it would not be right to suppose any wiser. Observe in that great house, where you see so many tapers burning, three men and two women round a table. They have supped together, and are now playing at cards to finish spending the night; after which they will separate. Such is the life that these ladies and gentlemen lead. They assemble regularly every night, and part at daylight, to go to sleep till darkness again drives away the day. They have relinquished the light of the sun and the beauties of nature. To see them thus surrounded with flambeaux, might it not be said that they are dead persons, who are waiting for the last offices to be done them?'

'There is no necessity of shutting up these mad people,' said Don Cléofas; 'they are so already.'

'I see in the arms of sleep,' resumed the cripple, 'a man that I love, and who is also very fond of me . . . a genius kneaded from dough of my making; it is an old bachelor who adores the fair sex. You can't speak to him of a handsome lady without observing that he listens to you with the greatest pleasure. If you tell him she has a small mouth, lips of vermilion, teeth of ivory, a complexion like alabaster; in a word, if you describe her minutely, he sighs at each feature, he rolls his eyes, he throbs with ecstasy. Two days ago, passing through the streets of Alcala, before a lady's shoemaker's shop he stopped quite short, in order to look at a little slipper he perceived there. After having viewed it with more attention than it deserved, he said with a languishing air to a gentleman that accompanied him, "Ah, my friend, there is a slipper that captivates my imagination! How delicate the foot must be for which it was made! I take too much delight in seeing it; let us go quickly. It is dangerous passing here."'

'We must set down that bachelor,' said Léandro Pérez.

'That is a proper opinion of him,' returned the devil; 'nor must we omit his next-door neighbour, an original of an Auditor, who, because he keeps his carriage, is covered with shame when he is obliged to make use of a hack. Let us couple this Auditor with a relation of his, a Licentiate, who is a dignitary

of great income in a church in Madrid, and who almost always goes in a hackney-coach, in order to save two very handsome ones and four fine mules that he keeps.

‘Let us put with that old man another who is asleep ten steps from us,—a French count, who has come to Madrid to see the Spanish Court. This old nobleman is in his fourteenth lustre. He shone, in the flower of his years, at the Court of his king; everybody there formerly admired his shape, his gallant air, and were more particularly charmed with his taste in dress. He has preserved all his clothes, and has worn them these fifty years, notwithstanding the fashions, which in his country vary every day. But what is most laughable, he imagines he is still possessed of those graces which were discovered in him when young.’

‘We need not hesitate,’ said Don Cléofas; ‘let us class this French nobleman with those who are worthy to be inhabitants of *la casa de los locos*.’

‘I bespeak a cell,’ resumed the demon, ‘for a lady that lives in a garret adjoining the count’s mansion. It is an old woman, who, through excess of tenderness for her children, has been so kind as to make them a gift of all her property, reserving a small alimony, which the said children are obliged to allow her, and which, in return, they are very careful not to pay.’

‘I must also send there an old bachelor of a good family, who no sooner gets a ducat than he spends it, and not being able to do without cash, is capable of doing anything to get it. A fortnight ago his laundress, to whom he owed thirty pistoles, came and asked him for them, saying that she wanted them in order to be married to a *valet de chambre*, who was courting her. “Thou hast then more money,” said he; “for where the devil is the *valet de chambre* that would become thy husband for thirty pistoles?” “Ah, but I have two hundred ducats besides,” answered she. “Two hundred ducats!” answered he with emotion; “zooks! thou hast only to give them to me; I will marry thee, and then we are square.” He was taken at his word, and his laundress became his wife.

‘Let us keep three places for those three persons who are returning from supping in town, and who are going into that mansion on the right, where they reside. One is a count, who piques himself on being fond of literature; the other is his

brother, the licentiate; and the third a wit attached to them. They are never separate; they all three visit together everywhere. The count's only care is to praise himself; his brother praises him, and extols himself; but the wit has three tasks in hand,—of praising them both, and of mingling his praise with theirs.

‘Two berths more. One for an old cit who is a florist, and having no income, must needs keep a gardener and his wife to take care of a dozen flowers he has in his garden; and the other for an actor, who, complaining of the inconvenience attending the comic life, said the other day to some of his companions, “Faith, my friends, I am quite disgusted with the profession. Yes, I had rather be only a country gentleman with a thousand ducats a year.”

‘It might be said that the same persons revive from time to time in new shapes. In that minister's secretary I discover Bollandus, who never kept in with any one, and affronted every one whose aspect was disagreeable to him. In that old president I see Fufidius, who lent his money at five per cent. per month; and Marsœus, who gave his paternal house to the actress Origo, is revived in that bachelor of family, who is eating with a theatrical lady in a country-house he has near the Escorial.’

Asmodeo was going to proceed, but as he all at once heard the tuning of musical instruments, he stopped and said to Don Cléofas, ‘There are musicians at the end of this street, who are going to give a serenade to the daughter of an Alcade de Corte; if you desire to have a nearer view of this entertainment, you have only to say the word.’

‘I am very partial to that kind of thing,’ answered Zambullo; ‘let us draw near to those symphonists, perhaps there are voices among them.’

He had not finished these words when he found himself on a house near the Alcade's.

The instrumental performers first played some Italian airs, after which two singers alternately sang the following couplets:

I.

‘Si de tu hermafura quieres
Una Copia con mil gracias;

Escucha, porque pretendo
El pintar la.*

II.

'Es tu frente toda Nieve.
Y el alabastro, batallas
Offreciò al Amor, hariendo
En ella vaya.†

III.

'Amor labro de tus cejas
Dos arcos para su Aljava
Y debaxo ha descubierto
Quien le mata.‡

IV.

'Eres Duená de el lugar,
Vandolera de las almas,
Iman de los alvedrios
Linda Alhaja.§

V.

'Un rasgo de tu hermosura
Quisiera yo retratar la,
Que es Estrella, es Cielo, es Sol
No es sino el Alva.'||

'The verses are gallant and delicate,' cried the scholar.

'They appear so to you,' said the demon, 'because you are a Spaniard; if they were translated into French, for instance, the composition would not appear to great advantage; readers of that nation would not approve of the metaphors, and would discover in them an extravagance of imagination which would make them laugh. Every nation is bigoted to its own tastes and genius; but let alone the verses,' continued he, 'you are going to hear another kind of music.'

* If you wish for a copy of your graces and your beauty, listen to me, for I intend describing them.

† Your face of snow and alabaster, has challenged Love who laughed at it.

‡ Love has made of your eyebrows two bows for his quiver; but he has discovered the bottom which kills him.

§ You are mistress of this abode, the enthraller of hearts, the loadstone of desires, a handsome jewel.

|| I would fain describe your beauty: in a word, 'tis a star, a heaven, a sun; no, 'tis but an aurora.

‘Follow with your eyes those four men who suddenly appear in the street ; there they are coming to fall on the performers. These last make shields of their instruments, which, not being able to resist the force of the blows, fly in pieces. See those two gentlemen coming to their assistance, one of whom is the patron of the serenade. With what fury they attack the aggressors ! But these last, who equal them in address and valour, give them a warm reception. What fire proceeds from their swords ! Take notice, one of the defenders of the serenade falls ; it is he who gave the concert ; he is mortally wounded ; his companion, who perceives it, takes to flight. The aggressors on their side make their escape, and all the musicians disappear. There remains on the spot only the unfortunate gentleman whose death is the price of the serenade. At the same time observe the Alcade’s daughter ; she is at her lattice, where she has observed all that has just now happened. This lady is so proud and vain of her beauty, although but ordinary, that instead of lamenting its fatal effects, the cruel fair plumes herself on it, and thinks herself the more amiable.

‘That is not all,’ added he ; ‘take notice of another gentleman who is stopping in the street by the one who is weltering in his blood, in order to assist him if possible ; but whilst he is employed in so humane an office, observe the patrol which is coming up ; see them take him to prison, where he will long remain, and it will go almost as hard with him as though he were the murderer of the deceased.’

‘How many accidents have happened this night !’ said Zambullo.

‘This will not be the last one,’ returned the devil. ‘If you were this moment at the Sun-gate, you would be terrified at the scene that is there preparing. Through the neglect of a servant, a house is on fire, where a quantity of valuable furniture is already reduced to ashes ; but whatever rich property it may consume, Don Pedro d’Escolano, to whom that unlucky house belongs, would not regret the loss of it, could he save Seraphina, his only daughter, who is in danger of perishing.’

Don Cléofas wished to see this conflagration, and the cripple transported him instantly to the Sun-gate, on a large house opposite the one on fire.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CONFLAGRATION, AND WHAT ASMODEO DID ON THIS
OCCASION THROUGH FRIENDSHIP FOR DON CLÉOFAS.

THEY immediately heard confused voices of several persons, some of which were crying *fire*, and others asking for water. They soon after observed that a large staircase, leading to the principal apartments in Don Pedro's house, was all in a blaze ; they then saw clouds of smoke and flames come through the windows.

'The fire is at its height,' said the demon ; 'the flames, already got to the roof, begin to make way through it, and fill the air with sparks. The conflagration is become such, that the people, who are running from all quarters to extinguish it, can do nothing but look on. Single out in the crowd of spectators, an old man in a night-gown ; it is Signior d'Escolano. Do you hear his cries and lamentations ? He is addressing himself to those that surround him, and entreats them to go and rescue his daughter ; but in vain does he promise them a great reward ; no one will expose his life for that lady, who is but sixteen years old, and whose beauty is inexpressible. Seeing that he implores their assistance without avail, he tears his hair and whiskers, he beats his breast ; the excess of his grief causes him to commit desperate actions. On the other hand, Seraphina, abandoned by her women, has swooned in her chamber through fright, where a thick smoke will soon smother her ; no mortal can succour her.'

'Ah ! Signior Asmodeo,' cried Léandro Pérez, actuated by the impulse of a generous compassion, 'yield to the pity I now feel, and do not refuse to grant the request I make to save this young lady from imminent death : that is what I ask in return for the service I have done you ; do not oppose my wish as heretofore ; I should be greatly afflicted thereat.'

The devil smiled to hear the scholar speak in this manner.

'Signior Zambullo,' said he, 'you have all the qualifications of a good knight-errant. You are brave, sympathizing in the misfortunes of others, and very ready in the service of young

ladies. Would you not willingly throw yourself in the midst of the flames like an Amadis, to deliver Seraphina, and restore her safe and sound to her father ?'

'Would to heaven it were possible !' answered Don Cléofas ; I would undertake it without hesitation.'

'Your death would be the only consequence of so glorious an attempt,' returned the cripple. 'I have already told you that human valour can do nothing in this instance, and I must undertake it to satisfy you ; take notice in what manner I am going about it ; observe all my operations from this.'

No sooner had he said these words, than borrowing the form of Léandro Pérez, to the great astonishment of that scholar, he slipped among the people, pushed through the crowd, and darted into the fire as into his own element, in the sight of the spectators, who were frightened at this action, and condemned it by a general clamour. 'What fool-hardiness !' said one ; 'how can interest have blinded him to such a degree ?' 'If he were absolutely mad, the proffered reward would not by any means have tempted him.' 'This rash youth,' said another, 'must be a lover of Don Pedro's daughter, and is resolved, in the affliction that he is in, to save his mistress, or to die with her.'

In short, they all agreed that he would meet the fate of Empedocles,* when, a moment after, they saw him come out of the flames with Seraphina in his arms. The air resounded with acclamations ; the people gave a thousand praises to the brave gentleman who had performed so glorious an exploit. When rashness is attended with success, it is no longer censured ; and this prodigy appeared to the nation as a very natural effect of Spanish courage. As the lady was still in a swoon, her father durst not give way to joy ; he feared, that after being so fortunately rescued from the fire, she would die in his sight, from the terrible compression the danger she had run must have made on her brain ; but his fears were soon dissipated, she recovered from her swoon by the precautions made use of for that purpose. She looked earnestly at the old man, and said to him tenderly,

'Signior, I should be more afflicted than overjoyed to see my life preserved if yours were not.'

'Ah ! daughter,' answered he, embracing her, 'I am consoled

* A Sicilian poet and philosopher, who threw himself into the flames of Mount *Ætna*.

for the rest, in not losing you. Let us thank,' continued he, presenting the fictitious Don Cléofas to her, 'let us both thank this young gentleman; he is your deliverer; it is to him that you owe your life; we cannot sufficiently express our gratitude, and the sum I have promised cannot discharge our obligation to him.'

The devil then answered, and said to Don Pedro in a polite manner, 'Signior, the reward you have offered was no inducement with regard to the service I have been so fortunate as to render you: I am noble, and a Castilian; the pleasure of having dried up your tears, and of snatching from the flames the charming creature they were about to consume, is to me an ample reward.'

The disinterestedness and generosity of the deliverer occasioned Signior de Escolano to conceive an infinite esteem for him; he asked him to come and see him, and requested his friendship, offering his own. After many compliments on both sides, the father and daughter retired to a dwelling-house which was at the bottom of the garden, after which the devil rejoined the scholar, who, seeing him return in his pristine form, said to him,

'Signior devil, can my eyes have deceived me? Were you not just now in my shape?'

'Certainly,' answered the cripple, 'and I am going to inform you of the motive of this metamorphosis: I have formed a great design; I intend you shall marry Seraphina; I have already, under your similitude, inspired her with a violent passion for your honour. Don Pedro is also much pleased with you, for I told him, very publicly, that I had no other view in delivering his daughter but their mutual satisfaction, and that the honour of having put an end to so perilous an adventure was a most glorious reward for a Spanish gentleman. The good man has a great soul: he will not be in arrears in generosity; and I will tell you that he is now deliberating within himself, if he shall make you his son-in-law, in order to proportion his gratitude to the service he thinks you have done him.

'Waiting for his determination,' added the cripple, 'let us fix on a more favourable situation than this to continue our observations. At these words he carried the scholar on a high church full of tombs.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE TOMBS, THE GHOSTS, AND DEATH.

‘BEFORE we proceed in the examination of the living,’ said the demon, ‘let us for a few moments disturb the repose of the dead of this church ; let us survey all these monuments, unveil their contents, and see for what reasons they were erected.’

‘The first of these on the right hand, contains the sorry remains of a general officer, who, like another Agamemnon, on his return from the war, found an Ægisthus in his house. In the second is a young gentleman of noble descent, who, wishing to display his agility and prowess to his lady, at a bull-fight, was cruelly slain by one of those animals. And, in the third, lies an old prelate, who left this world in a hurry ; for, having made his will in good health, and read it to his servants, to whom, like a good master, he bequeathed something, his cook was impatient to receive his legacy.’

There rests in the fourth mausoleum, a courtier, who was never weary of paying his court ; he was seen every day during sixty years at the levée, dinner, supper, and going to bed of the king, who loaded him with favours, to reward his assiduity.’

‘But’ said Don Cléofas, ‘was this courtier serviceable to others?’

‘To none,’ answered the devil ; ‘he freely promised assistance, but never kept his word.’

‘The wretch !’ returned Léandro ; ‘were it necessary to cut off from society superfluous persons, we must begin with courtiers of that stamp.’

‘The fifth tomb,’ resumed Asmodeo, ‘contains the carcass of a nobleman zealous for the Spanish nation, and having his master’s glory at heart ; he was all his life ambassador at Rome, or in France, in England, or in Portugal ; he ruined himself so completely in his embassies, that when he died he had not wherewith to bury him, but the king defrayed the expenses of it as an acknowledgment for his services.’

‘Let us proceed to the monuments on the other side. The first is that of a great merchant, who left immense riches

to his children ; but fearing they might induce them to forget from whom they sprung, he had his name and quality cut on his tomb-stone, which now is not very agreeable to his descendants. The next mausoleum, which surpasses all the others in magnificence, is a piece of work much admired by travellers.'

'Indeed,' said Zambullo, 'it appears inimitable to me ; I am above all enchanted with those two figures which are kneeling ; they are well executed. The sculptor who carved them must have been a skilful artist. But pray inform me who these persons were when living, whom they represent.'

The cripple answered, 'You behold a duke and his wife ; this nobleman was chief butler to the king ; he filled his office with honour, and his wife lived in extreme devotion. Next to this chief butler and his spouse a more modest mausoleum contains, for a short time past, the odd connection of a dean of the Council of the Indies, and his young wife. This dean, in his sixty-third year, married a girl of twenty. He had two children by his first wife, whose ruin he was on the eve of signing, when an apoplexy carried him off ; his wife died twenty-four hours after him, of regret that he had not died three hours later. We are now at the most respectable monument in this church. The Spaniards have as much veneration for this tomb as the Romans had for that of Romulus.'

'Of what great personage does it contain the ashes ?' said Léandro Pérez.

'Of a prime minister of the Spanish Crown,' answered Asmodeo. 'The monarchy will perhaps never have his fellow. The king intrusted the care of the government to this great man, who so well discharged the office, that the monarch and his subjects were amply satisfied with it. The state, under his administration, ever flourished, and the people were happy ; in short, this skilful minister was possessed of much religion and humanity. However, although on his death-bed he had nothing to reproach himself with, the delicacy of his situation did not fail to make him tremble. A little beyond that minister, so worthy of regret, take notice in a corner of a marble table affixed to a pillar. Shall I open the tomb beneath it, in order to show you what remains of a cit's daughter, who died in her prime, and whose beauty charmed all eyes ? She is now but

dust. She was so amiable when alive, that her father was continually in fear lest some lover might carry her off, which would probably have happened had she lived longer. Three gentlemen who doted on her were inconsolable for her loss, and killed themselves to signalize their despair. Their tragical history is inscribed in gold letters on that marble table, with three small figures that represent those three desperate lovers; they are on the eve of despatching themselves; one is swallowing a glass of poison, another is falling on his sword, and the other is fixing a string about his neck to hang himself. Besides the dead that are in the mausoleums I have just pointed out to you, there is a vast quantity of others that have been buried here without ornament. I see their wandering ghosts; they are walking, incessantly passing and repassing each other, without interrupting the profound silence that reigns in this holy place. They do not converse, but in their silence I read all their thoughts.'

'How mortified I am,' cried Don Clófas, 'at not being able to enjoy, like you, the pleasure of seeing them.'

'I can also gratify you in this,' said Asmodeo; 'there is nothing easier to me.' At the same time he touched his eyes, and by illusion showed him a vast number of white spectres.

At the sight of these ghosts, Zambullo shuddered.

'What then,' said the devil to him, 'you tremble? Do these frighten you? Let not their apparel terrify you; accustom yourself to it henceforth; you shall wear it in your turn; it is the uniform of ghosts; be composed and fear nothing: can you want fortitude on this occasion; you who have had the courage to sustain my sight? These folks are not so malignant as I.'

At these words the scholar, summoning all his courage, looked pretty boldly at the apparitions.

'Observe attentively all these ghosts,' said the cripple to him. 'Those who have monuments are confounded with those who have none other but a sorry coffin, for the subordination which distinguished them from one another when alive, no longer exists. The chief butler and the prime minister are now no more than the meanest plebeians buried in this church. The greatness of these noble ghosts ended with their lives, as that of a theatrical hero finishes with the play.'

'I make one observation,' said Léandro, 'I see a ghost walking alone, and seeming to avoid the company of the rest.'

'Rather say that the others shun his,' answered the devil, 'and you will speak the truth. Do you know whose ghost that is?' 'Tis that of an old notary, who had the vanity to be buried in a lead coffin, which has disgusted all the other plebeian ghosts, whose carcasses have been more modestly inhumed; in order to mortify his arrogance, they will not suffer his shade to associate with theirs.'

'I have just made another observation,' returned Don Cléofas; 'two ghosts meeting each other, stopped a moment to look at one another, and then went on.'

'They belong,' answered the devil, 'to two intimate friends, one of whom was a painter, the other a musician: they were wet souls, as to the rest, very good kind of people; they resigned their breath in the same year. When their ghosts meet, stung with the recollection of their pleasures, they say by their mournful silence, Ah! my friend, we shall tippie no more!'

'Bless me!' said the scholar. 'What do I see? I discover at the further end of this church two spectres walking together. How badly matched they appear to be! their shape and gait are very different. One is immoderately tall, and walks very solemnly; whereas the other is very small and has a thoughtless air.'

'The large one,' returned the devil, 'is that of a German, who lost his life by drinking in a debauch three toasts with tobacco in his wine. And the other is that of a Frenchman, who, according to the gallant disposition of the nation, took in his head going into a church, to present, very politely, holy water to a young lady that was coming out; that very day, in return for his courtesy, he was laid low by a musket-ball.'

'But let us leave all those ghosts to themselves,' continued the devil, 'we have sufficiently examined them. I intend presenting to your view a new sight, which will make a far stronger impression on you than this one. I am going to make death visible to you, by the same power that made you perceive those spectres. You shall behold that cruel enemy of the human race, who incessantly hovers about mankind without their seeing him; who in the twinkling of an eye travels through every part of the world, and even in a moment makes the different nations which inhabit it feel his sway. Look towards the east, behold him already before you; a vast flock of ominous birds are flying before him with horror, and announce his transit with

funeral cries. His indefatigable hand is armed with the terrible scythe, under which all generations fall in succession. On one of his wings are represented war, pestilence, famine, shipwreck, conflagration, with all the other fatal accidents that every moment are furnishing him with a fresh prey; and on the other wing are seen young physicians, who are taking their degrees in the presence of death, who gives them the cap, after making them swear that they will never practise physic otherwise than it is at present.'

Although Don Cléofas was convinced that there was no reality in what he said, and that it was only for his satisfaction that the devil showed him death in that shape, he could not behold it without terror. He, however, took courage, and said to the demon, 'This frightful figure will not merely pass over the city of Madrid, it will doubtless leave vestiges of its transit.'

'Yes, indeed,' returned the cripple, 'it does not come here for nothing. It is at your option to witness the havoc it is going to make.'

'I take you at your word,' answered the scholar; 'let us fly after it; let us see on what unfortunate families its rage will fall. How many tears will be shed!'

'I do not in the least doubt it,' answered Asmodeo; 'but many of them will be artificial. Death, notwithstanding its concomitant terrors, occasions as much joy as grief.'

Our two spectators took their flight and followed death to observe him. He first entered into a citizen's house, the master of which was dangerously ill; he touched him with his scythe; and he expired in the midst of his family.

'There is no deception,' said the demon; 'the wife and children of that cit loved him tenderly; besides, he was necessary to their subsistence; their tears cannot be counterfeit. It is not the case with what is going on in that house where you see death striking a bed-ridden old man: it is an old counsellor who has always lived in celibacy, and very parsimoniously, in order to heap up immense riches, which he leaves to three nephews, who assembled at his house, when they heard he was drawing near his end. They manifested extreme affliction, and have played their parts very well; but now they are throwing off their disguise, and preparing to act like heirs, after having made the grimaces of relations: they are going to rummage every-

where. How much gold and silver they will find ! “ What a pleasure,” just now said one of these heirs to the others, “ what a satisfaction, for nephews to have old covetous uncles, who forego the sweets of life in order that they may enjoy it ! ” ’

‘ A fine funeral oration ! ’ said Léandro Pérez.

‘ Oh ! faith,’ returned the devil, ‘ the greater part of rich fathers, and who live long, need expect no other from their own children. While those heirs very joyfully are seeing the treasures of the deceased, death flies towards a great mansion, where lives a young nobleman, who has the small-pox. This nobleman, the most amiable of the Court, is going to die in the prime of his life, in spite of the famous physician that attends him, or perhaps because he is governed by that doctor. Observe with what rapidity death performs his operations ; he has already cut the thread of this young nobleman, and I see him on the eve of making another expedition. He stops on a convent, goes down into a cell, makes a stoop at a good friar, and cuts the thread of a penitential and austere life he had led for forty years. Death, in all his terrors, did not intimidate him ; but, in return, he is going into a house which he will fill with dismay. He is drawing near a licentiate of condition, lately nominated to the bishoprick of Albarazin. This prelate is only thinking of the preparations he is making, in order to repair to his diocese with all the pomp which now attends the princes of the church. He thinks of nothing less than of dying ; however, he is going presently for the other world, where he will arrive, like the friar, without retinue, and I do not know if he will be as cordially received.’

‘ O heavens ! ’ cried Zambullo, ‘ death is going to pass over the king’s palace. I fear lest the miscreant, with one sweep of his scythe, throw all Spain into confusion.’

‘ You have reason to be afraid,’ said the cripple, ‘ for he has no more respect for kings than for their footmen. But dispel your fears,’ said he presently after ; ‘ he has no design upon the monarch ; he is going to fall on one of his courtiers ; on one of those noblemen, whose sole business is to follow him and make their court : these are not the most difficult men in the kingdom to be replaced.’

‘ But it seems,’ returned the scholar, ‘ that death is not satisfied with carrying off that courtier : he still makes a halt on the palace, near the queen’s apartment.’

'True,' replied the devil, 'and it is to do a very good action ; he is going to slip the wind of a bad woman, who delights in sowing discord in the queen's court, and who is fallen sick through spite at seeing two ladies reconciled whom she had set at variance.

'You are going to hear piercing cries,' continued the demon. 'Death has just entered that fine house on the left. There is going to happen there one of the most afflicting adventures that can be seen on the theatre of the world. Keep your eyes on that distressing sight.'

'Indeed,' said Don Cléofas, 'I perceive a lady tearing her hair and struggling in the arms of her women. Wherefore does she appear so much afflicted?'

'Look in the apartment opposite that one,' answered the devil ; 'you will see the occasion of it. Observe a man stretched out on a magnificent bed ; it is her husband, who is expiring. She is inconsolable. Their history is moving, and deserves to be recorded. I wish to relate it to you.'

'You will please me,' returned Leandro. 'I am not less affected with the pathetic than amused with the comical.'

'It is rather long,' resumed Asmodeo, 'but it is too interesting to tire you ; besides, although a demon, I am weary of following death. Let us leave him in search of new victims.'

'I am agreed,' said Zambullo. 'I have more curiosity to hear the history you have promised me than to see the whole human race die in rotation.'

The cripple then began the narration in these terms, after carrying the scholar on one of the highest houses in the street of Alcala.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FORCE OF FRIENDSHIP.

A HISTORY.

'A young Toledan gentleman, followed by his valet de chambre, was removing precipitately from his native place, to avoid the

consequences of a tragical adventure. He was two small leagues from Valencia, when, on the borders of a wood, he met a lady, who alighted from her carriage in a hurry. No veil covered her face, which was of a singular beauty ; and this charming person appeared so much agitated that the gentleman, imagining she needed assistance, did not fail to offer her that of his valour.

"Generous stranger," said the lady to him, "I will not reject the offer you make me ; it seems that heaven has sent you here in order to avert the misfortune I dread. Two gentlemen have made an appointment in this wood. I have just now seen them enter it. They are going to fight. Follow me, if you please, and assist me to part them." Thus saying she advanced into the wood, and the Toledan, having given his horse to his valet, hastened to join her.

"They had scarce gone a hundred paces when they heard the clashing of swords, and they soon discovered between the trees two men fighting furiously.

"The Toledan ran to part them, and having accomplished it by his efforts and entreaties, he asked them the occasion of their quarrel.

"Brave stranger," said one of the gentlemen to him, "my name is Don Fadrique de Mendoce, and my enemy is called Don Alvaro Ponce. We love Donna Theodora, that lady whom you accompany. She has ever paid but little attention to our cares ; and notwithstanding all the gallantries we have invented to please her, the cruel fair has not used us the better for them. As for me, I intended to continue serving her in spite of her apathy ; but my rival, instead of taking the same method, has thought proper to send me a challenge."

"It is true," interrupted Don Alvaro. "I thought it best to act in this manner. I believe that, had I no rival, Donna Theodora might listen to me. I therefore wish to take away Don Fadrique's life, in order to get rid of a man who is a barrier to my happiness."

"Signior cavalier," then said the Toledan, "I do not approve of your duel ; it injures Donna Theodora. It will soon be known in the kingdom that you fought for her ; your lady's honour ought to be dearer to you than your repose and your lives. Besides, what advantage can the conqueror expect to derive from his victory ? After having exposed the reputation of his mis-

tress, does he think she will look on him with a more partial eye? What blindness! Believe me, you had better both of you make an effort within yourselves more becoming the names you bear. Restrain your transports of fury, and by an inviolable oath bind yourselves, each of you, to accede to the proposition I have to make to you. Your dispute may be determined without bloodshed."

"Ah! in what manner?" cried Don Alvaro.

"This lady must determine," answered the Toledan. "Let her choose either Don Fadrique or you; and the discarded lover, far from arming himself against his rival, must give way to him."

"I am agreed," said Don Alvaro; "and I swear to it by everything sacred. Let Donna Theodora make her election; let her prefer my rival if she will; that preference will be less insupportable to me than the dreadful incertitude I am in."

"And I," said Don Fadrique in his turn, "take heaven to witness. If that divine object of my adoration do not pronounce in my favour I will fly from her charms; and if I cannot forget them, at least I shall see them no more."

"The Toledan then, turning to Donna Theodora, said to her, "Madam, you must now speak. You can with a word disarm these two rivals; you have only to name the one whose constancy you wish to reward."

"Signior cavalier," answered the lady, "seek some other mode of reconciling them. Why make me the victim of their reconciliation? I do, indeed, esteem Don Fadrique and Don Alvaro, but I do not love them; and it is not right that, in order to prevent the stain their duel might throw on my honour, I should give hopes which my heart cannot sanction."

"That evasion is to no purpose," returned the Toledan; "you must make your election, if you please. Although these gentlemen are equally handsome, I am convinced that you have more partiality for one than for the other; witness the dreadful fright in which I saw you."

"You put an improper construction on that fright," answered Donna Theodora. "The death of either of those gentlemen would most certainly affect me, and I should never forgive myself, although but the innocent occasion of it. But if I appeared

to you to be frightened, know then that the danger which threatens my reputation was the sole cause of my fear."

'Don Alvaro Ponce, naturally brutal, at length lost all patience. "It is too much," said he angrily; "since the lady refuses to end the business amicably, the fate of arms must then decide it." Thus saying, he put himself into a position to lunge at Don Fadrique, who, on his side, prepared to give him a warm reception.

'The lady then, more intimidated by this action than influenced by her inclination, cried out in dismay, "Stop, Signior Cavaliers; I am going to satisfy you. If there be no other means of preventing a duel so prejudicial to my honour, I declare that I give the preference to Don Fadrique de Mendoce."

'No sooner had she pronounced these words than the disgraced Ponce, without saying a word, ran and untied his horse, which he had made fast to a tree, and disappeared, darting furious looks at his rival and his mistress. The fortunate Mendoce, on the other hand, was at the summit of happiness. Sometimes he knelt before Donna Theodora; sometimes he embraced the Toledan, and could not find words adequate to express the gratitude with which he was penetrated.

'Meantime the lady, more composed after the departure of Don Alvaro, reflected with anxiety, that she had obliged herself to suffer the attentions of a lover whose merits she, indeed, esteemed, but for whom her heart was not prepossessed.

"Signior Don Fadrique," said she to him, "I hope you will not take advantage of the preference I have given you. You owe it to the necessity I was in of determining between you and Don Alvaro; it is not but that I have always had a greater esteem for you than for him. I well know that he is not possessed of all your good qualities. You are the most accomplished gentleman of Valencia; it is but just to allow it. I will even acknowledge that the suit of such a man as you are may flatter a woman's vanity; but however glorious it be for me, I confess I regard it with so little satisfaction that you are to be pitied for loving me so tenderly as you appear to do. However, I will not deprive you of all hopes of touching my heart; my apathy is, perhaps, but the effect of the grief which still hangs on me, for the loss I incurred a year ago of Don André de Cifu-

entes, my husband. Although we were not long together, and he of an advanced age, when my parents, dazzled with his riches, obliged me to marry him, I have been much afflicted at his death ; I still daily regret it.

“ And is he not worthy of my regret ? ” added she ; “ he was by no means like those peevish and jealous old husbands, who thinking it impossible for a young wife to have sensibility enough to excuse their debility, are themselves assiduous attendants on all her actions, or have her watched by a duenna, the tool of their tyranny. Alas ! he had a confidence in my virtue of which a young and beloved husband would scarcely be capable ; besides, his complaisance was unbounded, and I may venture to say that it was his sole study to anticipate all my wishes. Such was Don André de Cifuentes. You may well suppose, Mendocce, that a man of so amiable a character is not easily forgotten ; he is ever present to my imagination, and that undoubtedly contributes not a little to divert my attention from all that is done to please me.”

Here Don Fadrique could not avoid interrupting Donna Theodora.

“ Ah ! madam,” cried he, “ how overjoyed I am to learn from your own mouth that you have not slighted my attentions through aversion for my person. I hope you will one day or other yield to my constancy.”

“ It will not be my fault should that not happen,” returned the lady, “ as I give you leave to come and see me, and to converse with me sometimes respecting your love ; strive to prepossess me by your gallantries ; make me love you ; I will not conceal from you any sentiments I may entertain in your favour. But if, notwithstanding all your efforts, you cannot accomplish it, remember, Mendocce, you will have no right to reproach me.”

Don Fadrique was going to reply, but he had not time, for the lady took the Toledan's hand, and went off hastily towards her carriage. He went and untied his horse that was made fast to a tree, and leading him by the bridle, he followed Donna Theodora, who got into her coach with as much emotion as she had dismounted, although the reason was quite different. The Toledan and he accompanied her to the gates of Valencia, where

they separated. She took the way to her house, and Don Fadrique carried the Toledan to his.

'He made him rest himself, and after having well entertained him, he asked him in private what had brought him to Valencia, and if he intended making a long stay there.

"I shall be here as short a time as possible," answered the Toledan; "I only touch here on my way to the sea, where I mean to embark in the first vessel that is going to leave the Spanish coasts, for I care very little in what part of the world I finish the course of an unfortunate life, provided it be far from these fatal climes."

"What say you?" returned Don Fadrique with surprise. "What can disgust you with your country, and make you hate that which all men naturally regard?"

"After what has befallen me," answered the Toledan, "my country is hateful to me, and it is my only wish to quit it for ever."

"Ah! Signior cavalier," cried Mendoce, moved with compassion, "how eager I am to know your misfortunes! If I cannot alleviate your sufferings, I am at least inclined to share them. Your looks at first sight prepossessed me in your favour; your manner charms me, and I already feel much interested in your welfare."

"That is the greatest consolation I can receive, Signior Don Fadrique," answered the Toledan; "and in order to make some acknowledgment for the good wishes you express, I will likewise tell you, that when I first saw you with Alvaro Ponce I leaned on your side. An emotion of attachment, which I never before felt at first sight of a person, made me fear Donna Theodora might prefer your rival, and I was overjoyed when she determined in your favour. You have since so well improved that first impression, that instead of wishing to hide my cares from you, I seek to unbosom myself, and find a secret pleasure in discovering my soul. Learn then my misfortunes.

"Toledo gave me birth, and Don Juan de Zarate is my name. I lost in my earliest years those who gave me life, so that I soon began to enjoy four thousand ducats per annum, which they have left me. As I could dispose of my hand, and thought myself sufficiently affluent to consult my own heart in the choice of a

wife, I became attached to a girl of perfect beauty, who appeared to return my tenderness, and, although she was without fortune, I hesitated not to seek her in marriage. She accepted my addresses with gratitude, and the very day for the marriage ceremony was fixed, when it happened that one evening returning from church she attracted the attention of the Duke de Naxera; that nobleman, without considering the difference of rank, was so infatuated with her beauty as to become my rival. Conceive my rage, when from her altered manner towards me I perceived that my mistress preferred a duke to a simple cavalier. Stung with jealousy, I hastened to challenge the destroyer of my hopes. At the first encounter he wounded me slightly in the side, which so increased my fury, that closing rapidly, I plunged my sword into his heart. I well knew that I had no time to lose, that the duke's relations would make search for me through all Spain, and that the influence of my family not being adequate to theirs, I should only be safe in a foreign country; wherefore I picked out two of my best horses, and with all I had in money and jewellery I left my house before day. I took the road to Valencia, intending to embark on board the first vessel that should sail for Italy. As I was passing to-day near the wood where you were, I met Donna Theodora, who entreated me to follow her, and assist in separating you."

"After the Toledan had done speaking, Don Fadrique said to him, "Signior Don Juan, you are very justly revenged on the Duke de Naxera; do not make yourself uneasy about the search his relations may make; you shall remain, if you please, at my house until some opportunity offers to go to Italy. My uncle is governor of Valencia; you will be more secure here than elsewhere, and you will be with a man who henceforward will be connected with you by a close friendship."

"Zarate answered Mendocoe in the fullest terms of acknowledgment, and accepted the asylum he offered him.

"Admire the power of sympathy, Signior Don Cléofas,' continued Asmodeo; 'these two young gentlemen felt so much inclination for each other, that in a few days a friendship was formed between them similar to that of Orestes and Pylades. With equal merit, they were possessed of such a similarity of disposition, that whatever was agreeable to Don Fadrique did not fail to please Don Juan; their minds were the same; in

short, they were formed to love each other. Don Fadrique, more especially, was captivated with the manners of his friend ; he even could not help extolling him continually to Donna Theodora. They both went frequently to that lady's, who always beheld with indifference Mendoce's attentions and assiduity. He was much dejected thereat, and sometimes complained of it to his friend, who to comfort him used to tell him that the most insensible women let themselves at length be moved, that lovers only wanted patience to wait for that favourable opportunity ; he must not lose courage, his lady, sooner or later, would reward his services. This discourse, although the result of experience, did not encourage the timid Mendoce, who was afraid he should never be able to please the widow Cifuentes. This fear threw him into a dejection which excited Don Juan's pity, but Don Juan was soon more to be pitied than he.

'However great reason the Toledan had to be disgusted with women after the treachery of his mistress, he could not help loving Donna Theodora ; however, far from giving himself up to a passion so injurious to his friend, he only thought of resisting it, and convinced that he could not conquer it but by keeping away from those eyes which had kindled it, he resolved to see the widow de Cifuentes no more ; thus, when Mendoce wished to carry him to her house, he always found some apology for declining it.

'On the other hand, Don Fadrique never went to the lady's but she asked him why Don Juan came no more to see her. One day that she asked him this question, he answered her, smiling, that his friend had his reasons.

"And what reasons can he have for avoiding me ?" said Donna Theodora.

"Madam," answered Mendoce, "I wished to bring him to you to-day, and expressed my surprise at his refusing to accompany me."

'Don Fadrique observed Donna Theodora to colour ; he thought that vanity was the sole occasion of it, and that mere spite at being neglected occasioned her blushing. He was deceived in his supposition. A sensation more violent than vanity gave rise to her confusion ; but lest he should discover her sentiments, she changed the discourse, and assumed during the rest of the interview a vivacity which would have baffled

Mendoce's penetration, even had he not been deceived in the first instance.

'As soon as the widow de Cifuentes found herself alone, she fell into a deep study; she then felt the whole force of the inclination she had for Don Juan, and thinking it worse rewarded than it really was, "What unjust and barbarous power," said she, sighing, "takes delight in inflaming discordant hearts? I do not love Don Fadrique, who adores me; and I burn for Don Juan, whose thoughts are engrossed by another. Ah! Mendoce, no longer reproach me with my apathy; thy friend amply revenges thee."

'At these words, a lively emotion of grief and jealousy made her shed some tears; but hope, which mitigates the sufferings of lovers, soon presented to her mind flattering prospects. She fancied her rival might not be very formidable; that Don Juan was, perhaps, less attracted by her charms, than amused by her kindness; and that ties of so slender a nature were not difficult to be dissolved. In order to be convinced what she ought to think of it, she resolved to have a private interview with the Toledan; she sent for him; he came; and as soon as they were alone together, Donna Theodora spake in this manner:

"Don Juan, you never come to my house. I think I have great reason to be offended with you; I am also willing to believe that you do not avoid me from inclination."

"Madam," answered the Toledan, "I own you have a right to be surprised at my conduct, but I pray you do not wish me to exculpate myself; be satisfied with knowing that I have reason to avoid you."

"Whatever be that reason," returned Donna Theodora, "you must tell it me."

"Well, then, madam," answered Don Juan, "but do not complain if you hear more than you wish to be informed of."

"Don Fadrique," continued he, "has related to you the adventure which occasioned me to leave Castille; quitting Toledo, with my heart full of resentment against women, I defied them all even to surprise me. In this haughty disposition I drew near to Valencia; I met you, and what perhaps never any one else could do, I withstood your first looks without emotion: I have even since seen you with impunity. But, alas! how dear a few days of arrogance have cost me! You have at length

overcome my obstinacy ; your beauty, your wit, all your charms were marshalled against a rebel ; in a word, I have for you all the love you are capable of inspiring. That, madam, is what drives me from you."

'This discourse, unexpected to Donna Theodora, occasioned her so much joy that she could not avoid showing it ; indeed, she took no pains to conceal it ; and, instead of arming her looks with severity, she eyed the Toledan with a tender air, and said to him,

"You have discovered your secret to me, Don Juan, I will also disclose mine ; hear me with attention. Insensible to the sighs of Alvaro Ponce, unmoved by Mendoce's attachment, I led an easy and quiet life, when you accidentally passed near the wood where we met ; notwithstanding the agitation in which I then was, I did not fail to remark that you offered me your assistance in a very polite manner, and the method by which you separated two furious rivals gave me a very favourable opinion of your skill and valour ; the medium of reconciliation you proposed displeased me ; I could not, without much concern, determine to choose either of them ; but, to conceal nothing from you, I believe you contributed a little to my repugnance ; for, in the very moment when, compelled by necessity, my mouth named Don Fadrique, I felt my heart declare for the stranger. Since that day, which I must call fortunate, after the declaration you have made me, your merit has increased the esteem I felt for you. I do not conceal my sentiments from you," continued she ; "I disclose them with the same candour that I told Mendoce I did not love him. A woman who is so unfortunate as to feel an inclination for a lover who cannot be hers, is in the right to conceal her sentiments, and, at least, be revenged of her weakness, by eternal silence : but, I believe one may, without hesitation, disclose an innocent predilection to a man whose intentions are honourable. Yes, I am overjoyed that you love me, and I thank heaven, which, no doubt, has intended us for each other."

'After this discourse the lady was silent, that Don Juan might speak, and to give him an opportunity of giving loose to all the transports of joy and gratitude with which she thought she had inspired him ; but instead of seeming delighted with what he had just heard, he remained sorrowful and pensive.

"What do I see, Don Juan?" said she. "When I forget the coyness of my sex, and display to you a captivated soul, in order to bestow on you a happiness which another might think enviable, you oppose the joy which so condescending a declaration ought to occasion you; you keep a cold silence; I even perceive grief in your eyes. Ah! Don Juan, what a strange effect my kindness has on you!"

"Ah! what other effect, madam," sorrowfully answered the Toledan, "can it have on a heart like mine? I am the more miserable because you display so much affection for me. You are not ignorant of what Mendoce does for me; you know what a tender friendship connects us. Could I build my happiness on the ruin of his dearest hopes?"

"You have too much delicacy," said Donna Theodora; "I have made no promise to Don Fadrique; I may offer you my faith without deserving his reproaches; and you may receive it without being guilty of a theft. I allow that the idea of an unfortunate friend must occasion you some uneasiness; but, Don Juan, is it to be compared to the happiness which awaits you?"

"Yes, madam," replied he firmly; "a friend like Mendoce has more influence over me than you imagine; were it possible for you to conceive all the tenderness, all the force of our friendship, how deserving of pity you would think me! Don Fadrique conceals nothing from me; my cares are become his; the most trivial things in which I am interested cannot escape his attention; or, to say the whole in a word, I share his soul with you. Alas! had you wished me to take advantage of your kindness, you should have let me see it before I entered into so close a friendship. Delighted with the happiness of pleasing you, I should then have considered Mendoce but as a rival; my heart, aware of the affection he showed me, would not have made a return, and I should not now owe him so much as I do. But, madam, it is too late; I have received all the assistance he has proffered me; I have followed my inclination for him; gratitude and partiality bind me, and, in short, reduce me to the cruel necessity of relinquishing the glorious situation you offer me."

'Here Donna Theodora, whose eyes were full of tears, took her handkerchief to wipe them away; this action moved the Toledan; he felt his fortitude tottering; he began to be no longer master of his actions.

"Adieu, madam," continued he, in a voice interrupted with sighs, "farewell ; I must fly you in order to preserve my virtue ; I cannot resist your tears ; they make you too formidable. I am going to leave for ever, and deplore the loss of so many charms, which my rigid friendship compels me to forego." Having thus said, he withdrew with the remainder of fortitude which he had no small difficulty in preserving.

'After he was gone, the widow de Cifuentes was agitated by a thousand contending emotions ; she was ashamed at having unbosomed herself to a man she could not keep ; but, not being able to doubt but he was strongly smitten, and that only the interest of a friend made him refuse the hand she offered him, she was reasonable enough to admire so uncommon an effort of friendship, instead of taking umbrage at it. Nevertheless, as it is impossible not to be afflicted when things have not the desired success, she resolved to go the next day into the country, in order to dissipate her cares, or rather to increase them ; for solitude is more adapted to strengthen love than to weaken it.

'Don Juan, on his part, not having found Mendoce at home, had shut himself up in his apartment, in order to be at liberty to give vent to his affliction ; after what he had done for his friend, he thought he was, at least, at liberty to lament it. But Don Fadrique soon came to disturb his reverie ; and, finding by his looks that he was indisposed, he expressed so much uneasiness thereat, that Don Juan, in order to compose him, was obliged to tell him that he only wanted repose. Mendoce immediately went out to let him get rest ; but with so sorrowful an air, that the Toledan felt his misfortune much keener. "Oh heavens !" said he to himself, "must the most tender friendship in the world occasion all my unhappiness !"

'The next day Don Fadrique was not yet up when he received information that Donna Theodora had set out, with all her attendants, for her seat at Villareal, and that there was no likelihood of her returning soon. This news vexed him less on account of the uneasiness the separation from a beloved object occasions, than because this journey had been kept secret from him. Without knowing what to think of it, he considered it as ominous. He arose in order to visit his friend, as much to communicate it to him, as to learn the state of his health. But he

was scarcely dressed, when Don Juan entered his chamber, saying to him,

"I come to put an end to the uneasiness I have caused you; I find myself well enough to-day."

"This agreeable news," answered Mendoce, "compensates in some measure for the disagreeable intelligence I have received."

The Toledan asked what this ill news might be; and Don Fadrique, after having dismissed his attendants, said to him,

"Donna Theodora is this morning set out for the country, where it is thought she will remain a great while. This departure surprises me. Why has it been concealed from me? What think you of it, Don Juan? Have I not reason to be alarmed at it?"

Zarate took care not to tell him what he thought of it, and endeavoured to persuade him that Donna Theodora might be in the country, and he have no occasion to be concerned at it. But Mendoce, far from being satisfied with the reasons his friend suggested in order to encourage him, interrupted him.

"All this conversation," said he, "cannot dispel my anxiety; I may, perhaps, have imprudently done something to displease Donna Theodora; in order to punish me for it, she forsakes me, without even condescending to let me know my crime. Be it as it may, I can no longer remain in doubt; come, Don Juan, let us go to her; I am going to order horses to be got ready."

"I advise you," said the Toledan, "to take no one with you; this explanation should have no witnesses."

"Don Juan cannot be too much," returned Don Fadrique; "Donna Theodora is not ignorant that you know all that passes in my breast; she esteems you; and, far from encumbering me you will assist in pacifying her."

"No, Don Fadrique," replied he, "my presence cannot be of use to you; go alone, I entreat you."

"No, my dear Don Juan," returned Mendoce, "we will go together; I expect this compliance from your friendship."

"What tyranny!" cried the Toledan, in a peevish manner; "why do you require from my friendship what it ought not to grant?"

These words, which Don Fadrique did not understand, and

the hasty manner in which they were uttered, surprised him much. He eyed his friend attentively: "Don Juan," said he, "what means what I have just heard? What a horrid suspicion is arising in my mind! Ah! it is too much to constrain yourself and make me uneasy; speak! What occasions the reluctance you show to accompany me?"

"I wished to conceal it from you," answered the Toledan; "but since you have yourself obliged me to show it, I must no longer prevaricate. Let us no longer, my dear Don Fadrique, pique ourselves on the similarity of our affections; it is but too perfect; the shafts that have wounded you have not spared your friend, Donna Theodora . . ."

"You, my rival!" interrupted Mendoce, turning pale.

"As soon as I perceived my love," returned Don Juan, "I struggled with it. I have ever avoided the widow de Cifuentes; you know it; I conquered my passion at least if I could not destroy it. But yesterday that lady sent me word that she wished to speak with me at her house. I went there, she asked me why I seemed to shun her? I framed excuses; she would not admit of them. At length I was obliged to inform her of the real cause. I thought that after that declaration she would approve of my intention of avoiding her; but by a sinister effect of my planet . . . Must I tell it you? . . . Yes, Mendoce, I found Donna Theodora prepossessed in my favour."

"Although Don Fadrique had the sweetest and most reasonable disposition in the world, he was seized with a transport of fury at this discourse, and again interrupting his friend: "Stop, Don Juan," said he, "pierce my heart rather than continue this fatal narrative. You are not satisfied with acknowledging yourself my rival, you further inform me that you are beloved! Just heaven! what a secret you dare tell me! You put our friendship to too severe a trial. But what do I say? Our friendship! You have violated it, by harbouring the treacherous sentiments you declare to me. Great was my error. I believed you generous, magnanimous; and you are but a false friend, since you are capable of entertaining an affection which injures me. I am sinking under this unforeseen stroke; I feel it the keener as it comes from a hand"

"Do me greater justice," interrupted the Toledan, in his turn. "Have a moment's patience. I am nothing so base as a

false friend. Hear me, and you will be sorry for having called me by so hateful a name."

'He then related to him what had passed between the widow de Cifuentes and himself. The tender confession she had made him, and the discourse she had made use of in order to induce him to give way to his passion without remorse. He repeated all he had said in answer to that discourse; and as he spoke of the fortitude he displayed, Don Fadrique felt his rage dissipate.

"At length," added Don Juan, "friendship triumphed over love. I refused Donna Theodora's faith. She cried for spite. But, great God, what a contest her tears occasioned in my soul! I cannot think on the danger I ran without shuddering; I began to think myself cruel, and for some moments, Mendoce, my heart was faithless to you; however, I did not yield to my weakness, but tore myself, by a speedy flight, from such dangerous tears. But it is not enough to have avoided this danger; we must be cautious in future. I must hasten my departure; I will no more expose myself to Donna Theodora's looks. After that will Don Fadrique accuse me of ingratitude and treachery?"

"No," answered Mendoce, embracing him. "I restore you all your innocence. My eyes are opened. Forgive an unjust reproach to the first transport of a lover who sees all his hopes vanish. Alas! should I have thought that Donna Theodora could behold you long without loving you, without surrendering to those attractions, the power of which I myself have experienced? You are a true friend. I now only attribute my mishap to fortune; and, far from hating you, I feel my tenderness for you increasing. What then! you relinquish to me the possession of Donna Theodora! You make so great a sacrifice to our friendship, and I not be moved! You are able to subdue your love, and I not make one effort to conquer mine? I ought to keep pace with your generosity. Don Juan, follow your inclinations; marry the widow de Cifuentes; let my heart lament if it will, Mendoce entreats you."

"You entreat me in vain," answered Zarate; "I confess I have for her a violent passion; but your repose is dearer to me than my happiness."

"And should Theodora's happiness be indifferent to you?" replied Don Fadrique. "Let us not flatter ourselves; the predilection she has for you determines my fate: although you

were to remove far from her, though to yield her to me you go far from her sight, to lead a hapless life, I should be none the better ; as I have not hitherto been able to please her, I shall never win her affections ; heaven has reserved that glory for you alone. She loved you from the first moment she beheld you ; she has a natural inclination for you ; in a word, she cannot be happy without you. Accept then the hand she offers you ; crown her desires and your own ; leave me to my misfortune, and do not make three persons wretched when one alone can exhaust all the rigour of destiny."

Asmodeo was here obliged to break off his narrative, to listen to the scholar, who said to him, ' What you tell me is surprising. Are there actually people of so noble a character ? I see in the world but friends at variance, I do not say for mistresses like Donna Theodora, but for arrant coquets. Can a lover relinquish an object he adores, and by whom he is beloved, for fear of making a friend unhappy ? I thought it only existed in romance, where men are depicted as they should be, instead of as they really are.'

' I acknowledge,' answered the devil, ' that it is not a thing very common ; but it is not only in romantic nature, it is also in the refined disposition of man ; that is certain, as I have seen since the deluge more instances of it than this one. Let us return to my story.

' The two friends continued to sacrifice their passion to each other ; and neither being willing to give way to the other's generosity, their amorous sentiments remained suspended for some days. They no longer conversed about Theodora ; they even durst not mention her name. But whilst friendship was thus triumphant over love in the city of Valencia, love, as if in revenge, reigned triumphant elsewhere, and was obeyed without resistance.

' Donna Theodora was giving way to her tenderness in her castle de Villareal, situate near the sea ; she thought of Don Juan incessantly, and could not lose hopes of marrying him, although she ought not to have expected it, after the sentiments of friendship he had manifested for Don Fadrique.

' One day after sun-set, as she was amusing herself with a walk on the shore, with one of her women, she perceived a small barge making towards the land ; she at first thought that seven

or eight ill-looking fellows were in it ; but having had a nearer view of them and observing them with more attention, she imagined she had mistaken masks for faces. They were indeed men in masks, and all armed with swords and bayonets. She trembled at the sight of them, and not drawing a favourable conclusion from the landing they were about to make, she set off hastily for the castle. She now and then looked behind her, in order to observe them ; and seeing they had landed and were pursuing her, she began to run with all her might ; but as she was not so fleet as Atalanta, and the masks being nimble and robust, they overtook her at the gates of the castle, and stopt her.

‘The lady and the girl that accompanied her made great outcries, which immediately brought out some of the servants, who, giving the alarm to the castle, all Donna Theodora’s footmen came up, armed with pitchforks and sticks. Meanwhile, two of the most athletic men of the masked troop, having taken the mistress and maid in their arms, carried them towards the boat, notwithstanding their resistance, while the others opposed the people of the castle, who began to bear hard on them. The conflict was long ; but at last the men in masks fortunately effected their enterprise, and got back to their boat, fighting as they retreated. It was high time for them to be off, for they were not all on board when they perceived, towards Valencia, four or five horsemen, who were on full stretch, and seemed as if coming to Theodora’s assistance. At this sight the ravishers made so much haste to push off, that the expedition of the gentlemen was useless.

‘These gentlemen were Don Fadrique and Don Juan. The former had that day received a letter, by which he was informed that there were certain accounts that Alvaro Ponce was in the island of Majorca ; that he had fitted out a kind of tartane, and with a score of men who had nothing to lose, he intended carrying off the widow de Cifuentes the first time she should be at her castle. On this intelligence, the Toledan and he, with their valets de chambre, set out from Valencia, in order to come and inform Donna Theodora of this enterprise. They discovered at a distance, on the sea-side, a pretty great number of persons, who seemed to be fighting against each other ; and suspecting this might be what they feared, they set their horses on full gallop in order to oppose Don Alvaro’s plan. But, notwith-



standing their expedition, they only arrived to be witnesses of the rape they wished to prevent. Meantime, Alvaro Ponce, proud of the success of his boldness, was leaving the shore with his prey ; and his boat went on board a small armed vessel that was waiting for it at sea. It is impossible to experience more pungent grief than that of Mendoce and Don Juan. They uttered a thousand imprecations against Don Alvaro ; and filled the air with complaints, as pitiful as fruitless. All Theodora's servants, excited by so fine an example, did not spare lamentations ; the shore resounded with cries ; fury, despair, and terror reigned on those fatal shores. The ravishers of Helen did not occasion so much consternation in the court of Sparta.'

CHAPTER XII.

OF A QUARREL BETWEEN A TRAGIC POET AND A COMIC AUTHOR.

THE scholar could not help interrupting the devil at this period.

'Signior Asmodeo,' said he to him, 'I cannot withstand the curiosity I have to know what means a thing that attracts my attention. I observe, in a chamber, two men in their shirts, who have hold of each other's throats, and several persons in night-gowns, who are endeavouring to part them. Inform me, if you please, what all that means.'

The demon, whose only wish was to gratify him, immediately gave him that satisfaction in the following manner :

'The personages you see in their shirts, and who are fighting,' said he, 'are two French authors ; and the people who are parting them are two Germans, a Fleming, and an Italian ; they all live in the same house, in which are furnished apartments, where scarce any but strangers lodge. One of those authors makes tragedies, and the other comedies ; the first, for some difficulties he had in France, came to Spain ; and the latter, discontented with his situation at Paris, took the same journey, hoping to meet with better success at Madrid.'

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‘The tragedian is a proud and haughty genius, who has acquired a pretty good reputation in spite of the most judicious part of the public. To keep his muse in exercise he composes every day. Not being able to sleep this night, he has begun a piece, the plot of which he has taken from the *Iliad*; he has finished one scene, and as his least foible is that of having, like his brethren, a continual desire of pestering people with the rehearsal of his works, he got up, took his candle, and, in his shirt, came and knocked roughly at the comedian’s door, who, making a better use of his time, was sleeping very soundly.

‘This last awoke at the noise, and went to open the door for the other, who, with the air of a madman, said as he came in,

“Fall, my friend, fall at my feet; worship a genius favoured by Melpomene. I have just brought forth these verses . . . but what do I say? brought forth! it is Apollo’s self that has dictated them. Were I at Paris, I would go from house to house to read them. I am waiting for daylight in order to go and charm his Excellency, our ambassador, with them, as well as all the Frenchmen in Madrid. Before I show them to anybody I must recite them to you.”

“I am obliged to you for the preference,” answered the comic author, gaping with all his might; “but what is mortifying, you have ill chosen your time; I went to bed very late; I am overcome with drowsiness, and I will not engage to hear all the verses you have to read without falling fast asleep.”

“Oh! I’ll answer for that,” returned the tragedian; “though you were dead, the scene I have just composed would be capable of reviving you. My composition is not a medley of trite ideas and trifling expressions, which have only rhyme on their side; it is a nervous poem, which affects the heart and engages the attention. I am none of those poetasters, whose paltry novelties only pass over the stage like shadows, and go to Utica to amuse the Africans. My productions, worthy of being consecrated with my statue in the Palatine library, are yet crowded after thirty representations. But come,” added this modest poet, “let us proceed to the verses of which I am going to give you the handsel.

“This is my tragedy: *The Death of Patroclus*. Scene the first: Briseis and the other captives of Achilles appear. They are tearing their hair and beating their bosoms, to show their grief

for the death of Patroclus. They cannot even support themselves ; depressed by despair, they are letting themselves fall on the stage. You will tell me that is running some risk, but it is that I want ; let grovelling minds keep within the narrow bounds of imitation, without daring to transgress them ; it is all very well ; there is prudence in their timidity. As for me, I am fond of novelty, and I aver that in order to affect and delight the spectators, it is necessary to present to them objects quite unexpected.

“The captives, therefore, are all lying on the ground. Phoenix, Achilles's governor, is with them ; he assists them to get up, one after the other.”

‘He then began the exordium with these verses :—

“Priam shall lose his Hector and his Troy :
 Achilles to revenge his friend prepares :
 See glittering through the air on every side
 Pikes, lances, helmets, cuirasses, and darts.
 The rattling hail in less abundance pours.
 The Greeks all swear t’ appease Patroclus’ ghost.
 Fierce Agamemnon, and divine Camelus,
 Old honour’d Nestor, equal to the gods,
 Leontes, dextrous at the managed spear,
 Strong Diomede, and silver-tongued Ulysses,
 And, see ! Achilles comes—god-like he drives
 His steeds immortal towards Troy’s proud walls *
 And leaves the distanced winds far off behind ;
 Then thus he shouting cries—O vigorous race,
 Podargus, Xanthus, Balius ! quick advance !
 And when with spoil and carnage we are tired,
 Haste to regain our camp—but not without your master.
 Fleet Xanthus bows his neck, and thus replies,
 For Juno gave him speech—‘ Achilles, know,
 Your faithful horses shall your will obey ;
 But your dark hour of fate is drawing near.’
 He spoke—and now the winged chariot flies,
 Th’ exulting Greeks behold, and shouting loud,
 With sounds of joy resounds th’ adjacent coast.
 Drest in Vulcanian arms the cong’ring prince
 Appears more glitt’ring than the morning star,
 Or than the sun commencing his career,
 When he moves on to bless the world with day ;

* Hom. lib. 19.

He flames like fires which on some mountain top
Are made at night by the rejoicing swains.

"I stop," continued the tragic author, "to let you draw breath a moment; for, were I to rehearse the whole of my scene at once, the beauty of my versification and the great quantity of brilliant expressions and sublime ideas it contains, would suffocate you. Observe the aptness of this simile:

'—more shining than a fire made by the villagers.

Everybody don't feel that; but you, who have taste, and that of the best, must certainly be enchanted with it."

"I am so, indeed," replied the comic author, smiling sarcastically; "nothing is so beautiful; and I am convinced that you will not fail to mention also in your tragedy, the care that Thetis took to drive away the Trojan flies that came near the body of Patroclus."

"Don't think to ridicule it," returned the tragedian; "a poet of ability may run any risk; that passage may probably be the most proper one in my whole piece, to furnish me with pompous verses; I will not omit it, upon my word."

"All my works," continued he, without ceremony, "are of the right stamp; and, indeed, it is worth while to see how they are applauded whenever I read them. I stop at every verse to receive praise. I recollect reciting a tragedy one day at Paris, in a house where a number of geniuses resort every day about dinner-time, and where, without ostentation, I do not pass for a simpleton. The great Countess of Vieillebrune was there; her taste is nice and acute. I am her favourite poet. She wept bitterly at the first scene; she was obliged to change her handkerchief at the second act; she did nothing but sob at the third; she was indisposed at the fourth; and I thought at the catastrophe that she was going to expire with the hero of my piece."

'At these words, however desirous the comic author was to keep his countenance, he burst out laughing. "Ah! how well I know that good countess," said he, "by that anecdote. She is a lady that cannot endure a comedy; she has so much aversion for the sock that she usually leaves her box after the play, in order to carry home all her grief. Tragedy is her hobby-horse. Let the work be good or bad, only mention unhappy

lovers, you are sure of moving the lady. Candidly, were I to compose serious verses I should wish other admirers than her."

"Oh, I have others, too," said the tragic poet. "I have the approbation of a thousand people of quality, as well male as female."

"I should likewise be diffident of the applause of those persons," interrupted the comic author. "I should be on my guard against their opinions. Do you know why? Because that kind of auditors are mostly absent at a rehearsal, and let themselves be taken with the beauty of a verse, or the delicacy of a sentiment: this is sufficient to make them praise a whole work, however imperfect it might be in other respects. On the contrary, if they hear some verses, the flatness or harshness of which wounds their ear, nothing more is necessary to make them reprobate a good piece."

"Well," replied the serious author, "since you bid me beware of those judges, I appeal to the applauses of the pit."

"Oh, do not praise your pit to me," replied the other; "it displays too much caprice in its decisions. It is sometimes so grossly deceived at the exhibitions of new pieces, that it will be foolishly taken with a bad performance for two whole months. It is true that printing undeceives it, and the author remains disgraced after a splendid success."

"That is a misfortune I have no reason to fear," said the tragedian; "my works are as often printed as represented. I confess that is not the case with comedies; printing discovers their flimsiness, comedies being but trifles, little efforts of genius."

"Softly, Mr Tragic Author," interrupted the other, "softly. You don't consider that you are getting warm; prythee speak of comedy before me with somewhat less disrespect. Do you think that a comic piece is less difficult to compose than a tragedy? Undeceive yourself. It is not more easy to make gentlefolks laugh than to make them cry. Know that a well-chosen subject in living manners is not easier discussed than the most elegant heroic plot."

"Ah, faith!" cried the serious poet, in a sarcastic manner, "I am charmed with hearing you speak in these terms. Well, well, Mr Calidas, to avoid a dispute, henceforth I will esteem your works as much as I have hitherto despised them."

"I care very little for your contempt, Mr Gibley," hastily

returned Calidas. If you have a mind to be thrashed I'll thrash you at my quarters as well as elsewhere."

'At the same time they laid hold of each other's throats and hair, and thumps and kicks were not spared on either side. An Italian in bed in the next room heard all this dialogue, and supposed from the noise those authors made in fighting, that they were come to blows. He got up, and through pity for these Frenchmen, although an Italian, he called for help. A Fleming and two Germans, who are those you see in night-gowns, are coming with the Italian to part the combatants.

'This fray seems droll enough,' said Don Cléofas; 'but from what I see, tragic authors, in France, think themselves of greater importance than those who make comedies.'

'Certainly,' answered Asmodeo. 'The former think themselves as far above the others as the heroes of tragedies are above the scrubs of comic pieces.'

'Ah, on what do they ground their vanity?' returned the scholar. 'Can it, indeed, be more difficult to compose a tragedy than a comedy?'

'The question you ask me,' answered the devil, 'has been debated a hundred times, and is still every day. As for me, as I solve it with all deference to those men who are not of my opinion, I say that it is not more easy to compose a comic piece than a tragic one; for, if this last were more difficult than the other, we must infer that a composer of tragedies would be better able to make a comedy than the best comic author, which would not be agreeable to experience. These two kinds of poems, therefore, require two geniuses of a different stamp but of equal abilities.

'It is time,' added the cripple, 'to finish the digression. I am going to resume the thread of the story you interrupted.'

CHAPTER XIII.

SEQUEL AND CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE FORCE OF
FRIENDSHIP.

‘If Donna Theodora’s valets could not prevent her ravishment, they at least opposed it courageously, and their resistance proved fatal to some of Alvaro Ponce’s people. Among the rest, there was one so dangerously wounded that, his wounds not permitting him to follow his companions, he remained almost lifeless, stretched on the sand. This wretch was known to be one of Don Alvaro’s valets. They carried him to the castle, where no pains were spared to bring him to his senses; they succeeded, although the loss of blood had made him very weak. To induce him to speak they promised him to take care of his life, and not to give him up to the rigour of justice, provided he told where his master was carrying Donna Theodora.

‘He was flattered with the promise, although, in the situation he was in, he could have but little hope of deriving any advantage from it. He gathered together what little strength remained, and in a low voice confirmed the account that Don Fadrique had received. He then added that Don Alvaro intended carrying the widow de Cifuentes to Sassari, in the island of Sardinia, where he had a relation, whose protection and authority promised him a secure asylum.

‘This deposition assuaged the despair of Mendoce and the Toledan. They left the wounded man in the castle, where he died some hours after, and returned to Valencia, meditating what course they had to take. They resolved to go to seek for their common enemy in his retreat. They soon after embarked, without retinue, at Denia, in order to go to Port Mahon, not doubting but they would find some opportunity of going to the island of Sardinia. Actually they had no sooner arrived at Port Mahon than they heard that a vessel chartered for Cagliari was to sail immediately. They embraced the opportunity.

‘The vessel went off with a wind agreeable to their wish; but five or six hours after their departure it became calm, and the wind coming contrary in the night they were obliged to

haul their wind, hoping it would change. They sailed in this manner for three days ; on the fourth, about two in the afternoon, they perceived a vessel bearing down upon them under full sail ; they took her at first for a merchantman, but seeing her come almost within gunshot without hoisting any colours, they no longer doubted its being a Corsair.

‘They were not deceived ; it was a pirate of Tunis, who thought that the Christians were going to strike without fighting ; but when he perceived that they were brailing up their sails and getting their guns ready, he imagined the affair would be more serious than he had first thought, wherefore he stopped, braced up his sails likewise, and prepared for the fight.

‘They began to cannonade on both sides, and the Christians seemed to have some advantage ; but an Algerine Corsair, with a larger and better-armed vessel than the other two, coming up in the midst of the action, took the part of the pirate of Tunis ; he bore down under full sail on the Spanish vessel, and put her between two fires.

‘The Christians lost courage at this sight, and, unwilling to continue a contest which became so unequal, they left off firing. There then appeared on the poop of the Algerine vessel a slave, who cried out in Spanish to the people on board the Christians’ vessel, that they must strike to Algiers if they wanted quarter. After this cry, a Turk, who held a streamer of green taffeta, seeded with silver crescents interwoven, waved it in the air. The Christians, considering that all their resistance would be useless, no longer thought of defending themselves ; they gave themselves up to all the affliction that the idea of slavery can occasion to free men, and the master, fearing that a longer delay would but irritate barbarian conquerors, took the flag from the taffarel, threw himself into the boat with some of his sailors, and went to surrender to the Algerine Corsair.

‘This pirate sent a party of his soldiers to visit the Spanish vessel, that is, to plunder everything in it. The Corsair of Tunis, on his part, gave the same order to some of his people, so that all the passengers in this unfortunate vessel were in a moment disarmed and searched, and they afterwards made them go on board the Algerine, where the two pirates made a division of them, which was determined by drawing lots.

‘It had been at least a consolation for Mendoce and his

friend to have fallen in the power of the same Corsair ; they would have found their chains lighter could they have borne them together ; but Fortune, who wished them to experience all her rigour, assigned Don Fadrique to the Tunisian Corsair, and Don Juan to the Algerine. Represent to yourself the despair of these friends when they were obliged to part ; they threw themselves at the feet of the pirates to supplicate them not to separate them, but those Corsairs, whose barbarity was proof against the most affecting sights, did not let themselves be softened : on the contrary, concluding that these two captives were people of consequence, and that they could pay a great ransom, they resolved to share them.

‘ Mendoce and Zarate, seeing they had pitiless hearts to deal with, looked at each other, and by their looks expressed the excess of their grief. But when they had finished dividing the booty, and the Tunisian pirate wanted to get to his vessel with the slaves that had fallen to his lot, these two friends had nearly died with affliction. Mendoce went to the Toledan, and pressing him in his arms, “And must we part ?” said he. “Horrid necessity ! It is not sufficient that the presumption of a ravisher remains unpunished, we are even prevented from uniting our complaints and regrets. Ah ! Don Juan, in what have we offended heaven to undergo its wrath thus severely ?” “Do not seek elsewhere the occasion of our calamities, they are to be attributed to me alone : the death of the person I sacrificed, although pardonable in the eyes of men, has doubtless offended heaven, who is also punishing you for having entertained a friendship for a wretch pursued by its justice.”

‘ Thus saying, they both shed tears profusely, and sobbed with so much violence, that the other slaves were not less affected with that than with their own misfortunes. But the Tunisian soldiers, yet more cruel than their master, observing that Mendoce was delaying to leave the vessel, tore him in a brutal manner from the Toledan’s arms, and dragged him with them, loading him with blows. “Farewell, dear friend,” cried he, “I shall see you no more ; Donna Theodora is not revenged ; the hardships these barbarians are preparing for me will be the least calamities of my slavery.” Don Juan could not answer these words ; the treatment he saw given to his friend threw him into an agony which deprived him of his speech. As the order of

this history requires us to follow the Toledan, we shall leave Don Fadrique on board the Tunisian vessel.

The Algerine Corsair returned to his port, where, being arrived, he led his new slaves to the Bacha, and from thence to the market, where it is customary to sell them. An officer of the Dey Mezomorto bought Don Juan for his master, at whose house this new slave was employed to work in the garden of the Haram.* This occupation, although laborious for a gentleman, was nevertheless agreeable to him, on account of the solitude it required. In the situation in which he was, nothing could be more gratifying to him than the liberty of reflecting on his misfortunes. He thought of them incessantly; and his mind, far from making an effort to divert itself from the most affecting scenes, seemed to delight in reviewing them.

‘One day he was singing a mournful song while at work, without perceiving the Dey, who was walking in the garden. Mezomorto stopped to listen to him; he was satisfied with his voice, and advancing towards him through curiosity, he asked him his name. The Toledan answered his name was Alvaro. When he went to the Dey’s he had thought proper to change his name, according to the custom of slaves, and he had assumed that one because, having the ravishment of Theodora by Alvaro Ponce continually in his mind, it occurred to him sooner than any other. Mezomorto, who understood Spanish tolerably well, asked him several questions relative to the customs of Spain, and particularly on the conduct which the men made use of in order to make themselves agreeable to the women; to which Don Juan answered in a manner with which the Dey was pleased.

“Alvaro,” said he to him, “thou seemest to have understanding, and I do not think thee a man of the lower class; but whoever thou be, thou hast the good fortune to please me, and I will honour thee with my confidence.”

‘Don Juan at these words threw himself at the Dey’s feet, and rose again, after having applied the bottom of his robe to his mouth, his eyes, and then on his head.

“To begin to give thee marks of it,” resumed Mezomorto, “I will tell thee that I have in my Seraglio the most beautiful woman of Europe. Among the rest I have one to whom

* This is the name given to all Seraglios of private houses. The Seraglio of the Grand Signior alone is termed Seraglio.

nothing can be compared ; I don't think that even the Grand Signior is possessed of one so perfect, although his vessels are bringing him some every day from all parts of the world. It seems as though her face were the sun reflected, and her shape the stem of the rose-tree in the garden of Eram. Thou seest me quite captivated with her. But this miracle of nature, with such uncommon beauty, retains so dismal a sorrow, that time and my love cannot dissipate it. I have been intent on winning her heart by a complaisance and respect which the meanest Mussulman would be ashamed to have for a Christian slave.

“ Nevertheless, all my attentions do but increase her melancholy, the obstinacy of which at length begins to weary me. The idea of slavery is not so deeply imprinted in the minds of the rest ; my favourable looks have soon obliterated it ; this lasting grief tires my patience ; however, before I yield to my transports, I must make another effort ; I intend making use of thy interposition ; as the slave is a Christian, and also of thy nation, she may, perhaps, put confidence in thee, and thou wilt persuade her sooner than another. Extol to her my rank and my riches ; represent to her that I will distinguish her from all my slaves ; even give her room to expect, if it be necessary, that she may aspire at the honour of being one day the wife of Mezomorto ; and tell her I shall have more respect for her than I should have for a Sultana whose hand his Highness might offer me.”

‘ Don Juan prostrated himself a second time before the Dey, and, although not well pleased with this commission, assured him he would do his utmost to discharge it well.

“ Enough,” returned Mezomorto ; “ quit thy work and follow me ; I am going, contrary to our customs, to let thee speak in private with this fair slave : but beware of abusing my confidence : punishments unknown to Turks would reward thy presumption. Strive to overcome her sorrows, and recollect that thy liberty is annexed to the end of my sufferings.”

‘ Don Juan left off work and followed the Dey, who had gone before to prepare the disconsolate captive to receive his agent. She was with two old slaves, who withdrew as soon as they saw Mezomorto appear. The beautiful slave saluted him with great respect ; but she could not help trembling, which was always the case whenever he presented himself to her sight. He noticed

it, and in order to encourage her, "Amiable captive," said he to her, "I only come here to inform you that there is a Spaniard among the slaves, with whom you may, perhaps, be glad to converse; if you wish to see him, I will give him permission to speak with you, and that even in private."

"The beautiful slave expressed that she wished it.

"I am going to send him to you," returned the Dey: "may he be able by his conversation to alleviate your sorrows!"

"Thus saying, he went out, and meeting the Toledan, who had just come, he said to him softly,

"Thou mayest go in, and after thou hast conversed with the captive, come into my apartment and give me an account of this interview."

Zarate immediately entered the room, shut the door, saluted the slave without observing her, and the slave received his salute without looking at him attentively; but happening, on a sudden, to observe each other with attention, they gave a shriek of surprise and joy.

"O heavens!" said the Toledan, approaching her, "is it not a fallacious appearance that deceives me? Is it, indeed, Donna Theodora whom I behold?"

"Ah! Don Juan," cried the fair slave, "is it you who are speaking to me?"

"Yes, madam," answered he, tenderly kissing one of her hands, "'tis Don Juan himself! Know me by these tears, which my eyes, charmed at seeing you again, cannot withhold; I no longer murmur at fortune, as she now restores you to my wishes. . . . But how far does an immoderate joy transport me! I forget you are in chains! By what new whim of fate are you fallen in them? How were you able to escape from Don Alvaro's rash ardour? Alas! what anxiety it has caused me! and I dread to hear that heaven has not sufficiently protected virtue."

"Heaven," said Donna Theodora, "has revenged me on Don Alvaro Ponce. Had I time to relate"

"You have time enough," interrupted Don Juan: "the Dey permits me to be with you, and, what ought to surprise you, to converse with you without witnesses. Let us embrace these lucky moments: inform me of all that has befallen you since your ravishment till now."

“Ah ! who told you,” returned she, “that it was by Don Alvaro that I was carried off ?”

“I know it but too well,” answered Don Juan.

He then related to her succinctly in what manner he had been informed of it, and how Mendocce and he, having embarked to go in quest of her ravishers, had been captured by Corsairs. As soon as he had finished his relation, Theodora began hers as follows :—

“It is not necessary to tell you that I was much surprised at finding myself seized by a party of men in disguise : I fainted away in the arms of those who were carrying me, and when I recovered from my swoon, which was undoubtedly very long, I found myself alone with Ines, one of my women, out at sea, in the cabin of a vessel under sail.

“The unfortunate Ines began to exhort me to have patience, and I had reason to suspect, from her discourse, that she was concerned with my ravisher. He had the presumption to come in my sight, and, throwing himself at my feet, ‘Madam,’ said he, ‘pardon the method Don Alvaro has made use of to possess you ; you know what attentions I have paid you, and from what an attachment I disputed your heart with Don Fadrique, till the day you gave him the preference. Had I only entertained an ordinary passion for you, I had overcome it, and should have consoled myself for my misfortune ; but my fate is to adore your charms ; despised as I am, I cannot set myself free from their power ; nevertheless, do not apprehend anything from the violence of my love ; I have not made an attempt on your liberty in order to intimidate your virtue by unwarranted efforts ; and I intend, that in the retreat to which I am conducting you, a sacred and everlasting tie shall unite our destinies.’

“He made several other speeches which I cannot well remember ; but, to hear him, it seemed that he did not tyrannize over me in forcing me to marry him, and that I ought to consider him less an imprudent ravisher, than as a passionate lover. Whilst he was speaking, I did nothing but weep and rave, wherefore he left me, without losing time in persuading me ; but, as he withdrew, he made a sign to Ines, and I understood that it was for her to support artfully the arguments with which he wanted to dazzle me.

“She did not fail to do it ; she even represented to me,

that after the noise of a rape I could not possibly avoid accepting the hand of Alvaro Ponce, whatever aversion I might have for him ; that my reputation required this sacrifice of my heart. It was not the method to dry up my tears, to show me the necessity of this dread marriage, and I was inconsolable. Ines no longer knew what to say to me, when, on a sudden, we heard a great noise on deck, which drew all our attention.

“The noise Don Alvaro’s people were making was occasioned by the sight of a large vessel bearing down upon us, under full sail. As ours was not so fast a sailer as that one, it was impossible for us to get clear. It came near us, and presently we heard cried out, ‘*Bring to, bring to ;*’ but Alvaro Ponce and his people, willing to die rather than surrender, were bold enough to fight ; the action was very warm ; I will not give you a description of it : I will only tell you that Don Alvaro and all his people were killed, after having fought like desperadoes. As for us, they made us go on board the large vessel, which belonged to Mezomorto, and was commanded by Aby Aly Ofnan, one of his officers.

“Aby Aly eyed me a long while with surprise, and knowing, from my dress, that I was a Spaniard, said to me in the Castilian tongue, ‘Moderate your affliction ; console yourself for having fallen into slavery : this misfortune you could not avoid. But, what do I say ! this misfortune—it is an advantage on which you ought to congratulate yourself. You are too handsome to stoop to the homage of Christians. Heaven did not ordain you for those vile mortals ; you deserve the adoration of the first men in the world : Mussulmen alone are worthy of possessing you. I am going,’ continued he, ‘to return to Algiers ; although I have taken no other prize. I am confident that the Dey, my master, will be very well satisfied with my cruise. I do not apprehend that he will condemn my impatience to deliver into his hands a beauty that will be the delight and the ornament of his Seraglio.’

“At this discourse, which apprized me of what I had to apprehend, I redoubled my tears. Aby Aly, who saw with a different eye than I did the occasion of my terror, did nothing but laugh, and steered towards Algeria, whilst I afflicted myself without moderation. Sometimes I addressed my sighs to heaven, and implored its assistance ; sometimes I wished some

Christian vessels would come and attack us ; or that the waves might swallow us ; after that I wished that my tears and my grief might make me so hideous that my sight might fill the Dey with horror. Fruitless wishes, which my modesty, alarmed, made me form ! We arrived at the port ; I was conducted to this palace ; I appeared before Mezomorto. I do not know what Aby Aly said when he presented me to his master, nor what his master answered him, because they spoke Turkish ; but I thought I perceived in the looks and behaviour of the Dey that I had the misfortune to please him ; and the things he afterwards said to me in Spanish, drove me most completely to despair, by confirming me in that opinion.

“ I threw myself at his feet without success, and promised him all he should ask for my ransom ; in vain I tempted his avarice with the offer of all my property ; he said he valued me more than all the riches in the world. He had this apartment prepared for me, which is the most superb one in his palace, and since that time he has spared nothing in order to dissipate the sorrow with which he sees me oppressed. He brings me all the slaves of both sexes that can sing, or play on any instrument. He has taken Ines from me, thinking that she did but feed my regret, and I am attended by old slaves, who are incessantly representing to me their master's love, and all the different pleasures in store for me.

“ But everything that is made use of to amuse me has quite a contrary effect ; nothing can comfort me. A captive in this hateful palace, which every day resounds with the cries of oppressed innocence, I suffer still less from the loss of my liberty than from the dread with which the Dey's odious tenderness inspires me. Although I have hitherto found in him but a complaisant and respectful lover, I am not the less alarmed ; and I fear that, weary of a respect which perhaps is really irksome to him, he may at length make an ill use of his power. I am continually agitated with this horrid apprehension, and every moment of my life is to me a fresh punishment.”

Donna Theodora could not finish these words without shedding tears. Don Juan was affected thereat. “ It is not without reason, madam,” said he to her, “ that you represent to yourself what may happen in so horrid a light ; I am as much alarmed about it as you are. The Dey's respect is nearer alter-

ing than you imagine; this submissive lover will soon throw off his counterfeit softness; I know it but too well, and I see all the risk you run.

"But," continued he, altering his tone, "I will not be a quiet spectator of it; although a slave, my despair is to be dreaded. Before Mezomorto injures you I will plunge in his bosom. . . ."

"Ah! Don Juan," interrupted the widow de Cifuentes, "what a plan you dare form! Beware of executing it. With what cruelties would this death be followed! Would not the Turks revenge it? The most dreadful torments. . . . I cannot think of it without shuddering! Besides, is it not exposing yourself to useless danger? Would you restore me to liberty by taking the Dey's life? Alas! I might perhaps be sold to some villain who might have less respect for me than Mezomorto. It is thine, O heaven, to display thy justice! Thou knowest the brutal desire of the Dey; thou forbiddest me the sword and poison; it is thine, therefore, to prevent a crime which offends thee."

"Yes, madam," returned Zarate, "heaven will prevent it; I already feel it inspiring me. What now occurs to my mind is, no doubt, a secret counsel given me. The Dey has only permitted me to see you to prevail on you to answer his love. I am to go and give him an account of our conversation; we must deceive him. I intend to tell him that you are not inconsolable, that the conduct he assumes towards you is beginning to soothe your cares, and that if he persevere he may hope everything. Second me on your part; when he sees you again, let him find you less sorrowful than usual; seem to take some pleasure in his conversation."

"What constraint!" interrupted Donna Theodora. "How can a soul, candid and sincere, so far forget itself? And what will be the advantage of so painful a deceit?"

"The Dey," answered he, "will be pleased with this alteration, and will wish to complete the conquest of you by his assiduity. In the mean time I will be employed at your deliverance. The task is arduous, I confess; but I know an artful slave whose ingenuity, I hope, will not be useless to us.

"I leave you," continued he; "the business requires dispatch. We will see each other again. I am going to the Dey

to endeavour to amuse his impetuous ardour with fictions. Do you, madam, prepare to receive him ; dissimulate, exert yourself ; let your looks, which are hurt by his presence, be divested of hatred and rigour ; let your mouth, which opens every day only to lament your misfortunes, hold up a language that may flatter him ; do not be afraid of appearing too favourable to him. In order to grant nothing, you must promise everything."

" "Enough," answered Donna Theodora ; " I will do all you tell me, since the misfortune that awaits me imposes on me this cruel necessity. Go, Don Juan, exert yourself to put an end to my slavery ; it will be an additional joy to me if I owe my liberty to you."

'The Toledan, in conformity to Mezomorto's command, went to him.

" "Well, Alvaro," said the Dey to him with much emotion, " what news dost thou bring me from my fair slave ? Hast thou prevailed on her to listen to me ? "

" "Signior," answered Don Juan, " the slave is a young lady that has never yet loved ; she is so haughty that she has rejected the addresses of the first noblemen in Spain ; she reigned unrivalled in her country ; she is in captivity here. A proud spirit must long feel the difference of these two situations. Nevertheless, this proud Spanish lady will, like the rest, become habituated to slavery. I even may venture to tell you that her fetters begin to be less burdensome to her : the attentive respect you have for her, those assiduous cares which she did not expect from you, soothe her grief, and gradually overcome her haughtiness. Improve, Signior, this favourable disposition ; persevere, effectually charm this handsome slave by fresh assiduity, and you will soon find her yielding to your desires, losing in your arms the love of liberty."

" "Thou charimest me with this discourse," cried the Dey. " The hope thou givest can do anything with me. But dost thou not deceive me ? or art thou not thyself deceived ? I am going immediately to converse with the slave ; I must try if I can perceive in her eyes the flattering appearances thou hast observed."

'Thus saying, he went to find Theodora, and the Toledan returned to the garden, where he met the gardener, who was the artful slave whose ingenuity he intended to make use of to de-

liver the widow de Cifuentes from slavery. The gardener, named Francisco, was from Navarre ; he was perfectly acquainted with Algiers, having served several patrons there before he belonged to the Dey.

" Francisco, my friend," said Don Juan to him, " you see me very much afflicted. There is in this palace a young lady of the greatest respectability in Valencia ; she has requested Mezomorto to fix her ransom himself, but he will not let her be ransomed because he is in love with her."

" And why does that distress you so much ? " said Francisco.

" Because I am of the same city," answered the Toledan ; " her relations and mine were intimate friends ; there is nothing I would not do to contribute to her release."

" Although that be not a very easy matter," returned Francisco, " I may venture to assure you that I can accomplish it, if the lady's relations were disposed to reward this service handsomely."

" Do not doubt it," replied Don Juan ; " I will answer for their acknowledgment, and more especially for hers. Her name is Donna Theodora ; she is the widow of a man who left her vast property, and she is as generous as affluent. In a word, I am a Spaniard, and noble, my word ought to be sufficient for you."

" Well," answered the gardener, " on the faith of your promise, I am going to look for a Catalonian renegade I am acquainted with, and to propose to him. . . ."

" What do you say ? " interrupted the Toledan, quite surprised. " Could you trust to a wretch who was not ashamed of abjuring his religion for. . . ? "

" Although a renegade," interrupted Francisco, in his turn, " he is nevertheless an honest man. He appears to me more deserving of pity than of hatred ; and I could find him excusable did his crime admit of palliation. This is briefly his history :

" He is a native of Barcelona, and by profession a surgeon. Finding his affairs not to answer very well at Barcelona, he resolved to go and settle at Carthageua, thinking that by changing his situation he might be more fortunate. He therefore embarked for Carthageua with his mother ; but they fell in with an Algerine pirate, who captured them and brought them to this

city. They were sold, his mother to a Moor, and himself to a Turk, who treated him so ill, that he embraced Mahometanism to end his cruel slavery, as also to procure his mother's liberty, whom he saw treated with much rigour by the Moor, her patron. In short, having entered into the Bacha's pay, he went cruising several times, and made four hundred patacoons; he laid out part of them in his mother's ransom, and, in order to improve the rest, he took in his head to infest the seas on his own account.

"He became a captain. He bought a small open vessel; and with some Turkish soldiers who agreed to join him, he went to cruise between Alicant and Carthage. He came back loaded with booty: he again returned, and his cruises were so successful that he at length found himself in a situation to fit out a large vessel, with which he made some considerable captures; but he ceased to be fortunate. He one day attacked a French frigate, which used his vessel so roughly that he had much trouble to get back to the port of Algiers. As in this country people judge of the merit of pirates from the success of their enterprises, the renegado, by his misfortunes, acquired the contempt of the Turks. He was vexed and mortified thereat. He sold his vessel and retired to a house out of the city, where he has lived ever since with his mother, and several slaves who attend them, on the property he has left.

"I often go to see him. We lived together with the same master; we are intimate friends; he discloses to me his most secret thoughts; and not three days ago he told me, with tears in his eyes, that he could not be at rest since he had the misfortune to abjure his faith; that, in order to quiet the remorse which incessantly torments him, he is sometimes tempted to trample the turban underfoot, and, at the risk of being burnt alive, atone for the scandal he has caused to Christians by a public acknowledgment of his repentance. Such is the renegado," continued Francisco, "to whom I am going to apply. A man of this stamp you ought not to be suspicious of. I am going out under pretence of going to the Bagnio.* I will call on him. I will represent to him that, instead of pining with regret at having withdrawn from the bosom of the Church, he ought rather to think on some method of returning to it; that for this purpose he need only fit out a vessel, as if weary of his idle life, and that

* The place where the slaves assemble.



with this vessel we will make the coast of Valencia, where Donna Theodora will give him wherewith to spend the remainder of his days at Barcelona."

"Yes, my dear Francisco," cried Don Juan, elated with the hope the Navarrese slave gave him, "you may promise everything to this renegado. You may both be sure of being well rewarded. But do you think that this plan may be put into execution in the manner you imagine?"

"There may be some obstacles which do not occur to me," replied Francisco; "but the renegado and I will remove them. Alvaro," added he, leaving him, "I have great hopes of our enterprise, and I trust I shall have good news to tell you when I return."

The Toledan waited for Francisco, not without uneasiness, who returned three or four hours after, and said to him, "I have spoken to the renegado. I proposed our plan to him, and after a long deliberation we have agreed that he shall buy a vessel ready for sea; that, as it is allowed to take slaves for sailors, he shall make use of all his own. Thus, to prevent suspicion, he shall hire twelve Turkish soldiers, as if he actually had a mind to go cruising; but that two days prior to the one he may appoint for their departure, he shall embark in the night with his slaves, weigh anchor without noise, and come and take us with his boat, through a little gate of this garden, which is not far from the sea. That is the plan of our enterprise; you may apprize the captive lady of it, and assure her that in fifteen days, at farthest, she shall be liberated."

"What joy for Zarate to have such agreeable intelligence to give Donna Theodora!"

"In order to obtain permission to see her the next day he sought for Mezomorto, and having met him, "Pardon me, Signior," said he to him, "for daring to ask how you found the fair slave. Are you better satisfied? . . ."

"I am charmed with her," interrupted the Dey; "her eyes did not avoid my tender looks; her conversation, which before was but continual reflections on her situation, was not mingled with any complaint, and she seemed even to pay an obliging attention to mine. It is to thy care, Alvaro, that I owe this alteration. I see thou art well acquainted with thy countrywomen. I wish thee again to exert thy wit and ingenuity to accelerate my bliss."

I will then break thy chains, and I swear, by the soul of our great prophet, that I will send thee back to thy own country loaded with so many favours that the Christians, seeing thee again, may not think thou returnest from slavery."

"The Toledan did not fail to flatter Mezomorto's error; he pretended to be very thankful for his promises, and under pretence of wishing to accelerate the accomplishment of them, he hastened to go and see the fair slave. He found her alone in her apartment; the old women who attended on her were employed elsewhere. He informed her of what the Navarrese and renegado had planned together, on the strength of the promise he had made them.

"It was a great consolation for the lady to hear that such good measures were taken for her deliverance. "Is it possible," cried she, in an excess of joy, "that I may hope to see Valencia again—my dear country? What happiness after so many dangers and alarms, to live there tranquilly with you! Ah, Don Juan, how pleasing that idea is to me! Do you enjoy the pleasure of it with me? Do you reflect, that in snatching me from the Dey, you are taking your wife from him?"

"Alas," answered Zarate, heaving a deep sigh, "what charms those flattering words would have for me did not the remembrance of an unfortunate lover occur to dash them with a bitter that absorbs all their sweets! Pardon this delicacy, madam; acknowledge even that Mendoce is deserving of your pity. It is for you that he left Valencia; that he lost his liberty; and, I doubt not, that at Tunis he is less oppressed with the weight of his chains than with despair at not having revenged you."

"He, no doubt, deserves a better fate," said Donna Theodora. "I take heaven to witness that I am sensible of all he has done for me. I feel acutely the pangs I occasion him; but through a cruel effect of the malignity of my stars, my heart cannot be the reward of his services."

"The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the two old women that attended the widow de Cifuentes. Don Juan changed the topic, and, acting the part of the Dey's confidant, "Yes, charming captive," said he to Theodora, "you have enslaved him who keeps you in bondage. Mezomorto, your master and mine, the most amorous and most amiable of all the

Turks, is much pleased with you. Persevere in treating him kindly, and you will soon see the end of your sorrows." He went out as he said these last words, the true meaning of which was only understood by that lady.

'Matters remained for eight days in this situation at the Dey's palace. In the mean time the Catalonian renegado had bought a small vessel almost fit for sea, and he was making preparations for his departure; but six days before he was in a situation fit to go to sea Don Juan had fresh alarms.

'Mezomorto sent for him, and having taken him into his closet, "Alvaro," said he, "thou art free; thou mayest go when thou pleasest back to Spain. The presents I have promised thee are ready. I have seen the fair slave this day. How different she appeared to be from that person whose sorrow gave me so much uneasiness! The idea of her slavery diminishes daily. I have found her so charming that I have just made a determination to marry her; she shall be my wife in two days."

'Don Juan changed colour at these words; and notwithstanding the efforts he made to conceal his emotions, he could not disguise his trouble and surprise from the Dey, who asked him the occasion.

"Signior," answered the Toledan in his perplexity, "I am indeed surprised that one of the most considerable personages of the Ottoman empire should stoop so low as to marry a slave. I well know that it is not without precedent among you; but—in short, shall the illustrious Mezomorto, who may aspire to the daughters of the first officers of the Porte"

"I grant that," interrupted the Dey. "I might even aspire to the grand vizier's daughter, and flatter myself with succeeding to the office of my father-in-law; "but I have immense riches and little ambition. I prefer the quiet and pleasures I here enjoy to the viziership, that dangerous honour which we no sooner attain than the fear of sultans, or the jealousy of envious persons who are about them, hurl us from it. Besides, I love my slave; and her beauty renders her sufficiently deserving of the rank to which my tenderness invites her. But," continued he, "she must change her religion to-day in order to merit the honour I intend doing her. Dost thou think that ridiculous prejudices will induce her to despise it?"

"No, Signior," returned Don Juan. "I am persuaded she

will sacrifice everything to so splendid a situation. However, give me leave to tell you that you ought not to marry her hastily ; do not urge matters. It is not to be doubted that the idea of abjuring a religion she has imbibed with her milk will at first shock her ; give her time to reflect. When she represents to herself that, instead of dishonouring her, and letting her grow old abjectly among the rest of your captives, you connect her to you by a marriage that crowns her with glory, her gratitude and her vanity will gradually conquer her repugnance. Postpone the execution of your plan for eight days only."

"The Dey remained pensive for some time. The delay his confidant proposed was not very agreeable to him ; however, the advice seemed to him very judicious. "I yield to thy reasons, Alvaro," said he ; "however impatient I be to possess the slave, I will wait these eight days. Go and see her presently, and prevail on her to gratify my desires after that period. I intend that the same Alvaro who has so well served me with her, shall have the honour of giving me her hand."

"Don Juan ran to Theodora's apartment, and informed her of what had just passed between Mezomorto and him, in order that she might conduct herself accordingly. He also told her that the renegado's vessel would be ready in six days ; and as she appeared very uneasy about the manner in which she might get out of her apartment, as all the doors of the rooms through which she must pass in order to come at the staircase were well fastened :

"That ought to give you very little uneasiness, madam," said he to her. "A window of your room looks into the garden ; you shall descend by that with a ladder I shall take care to provide."

"At length, the six days being expired, the slave Francisco informed the Toledan that the renegado was getting ready to set out the next night. You may suppose it was expected with much impatience. It arrived at length ; and most fortunately it became very dark. As soon as the moment was come to execute the enterprise Don Juan went and placed the ladder under the window of the fair slave's room, who was watching him, and immediately descended with much eagerness and agitation. She then leaned on the Toledan, who led her towards the little garden-door which opened to the sea.

‘They both walked very fast, and were already anticipating the pleasure of seeing themselves out of slavery ; but fortune, with whom these lovers were not yet well reconciled, threw in their way a misfortune more cruel than all those they had hitherto experienced, and which they had least foreseen.

‘They were already out of the garden, and were walking on the shore to get to the boat, which was waiting for them, when a man whom they supposed a companion of their flight, and of whom they had no mistrust, came straight to Don Juan, with his sword drawn, and plunged it into his bosom. “Perfidious Alvaro Ponce,” cried he, “it is thus Don Fadrique de Mendoza ought to punish a base ravisher : thou dost not deserve that I should attack thee like a brave man.”

‘The Toledan could not withstand the force of the blow which knocked him down, and at the same time Donna Theodora, whom he was supporting, seized at once with astonishment, with grief and terror, fell in a swoon on the other side. “Ah ! Mendoza,” said Don Juan, “what have you done ? It is your friend you have just stabbed.”

“Just heaven !” returned Don Fadrique, “can it be possible that I have assassinated”

“I forgive you my death,” interrupted Zarate ; “fate alone is culpable, or rather it intended thereby to end our misfortunes. Yes, my dear Mendoza, I die content, since I return to your hands Donna Theodora, who can assure you that my friendship for you is unaltered.”

“Too generous friend !” cried Don Fadrique, actuated by an impulse of despair, “you shall not die alone ; the same blade that has stabbed you shall punish your assassin ; if my error can palliate my crime, it cannot console me for it.” At these words he turned the point of his sword against his stomach, and fell on the body of Don Juan, who fainted, less weakened by the loss of blood than surprised at his friend’s fury.

‘Francisco and the renegado, who were ten steps off, and who had their reasons for not helping the slave Alvaro, were much surprised to hear Don Fadrique’s last words, and to see his last action. They knew he had made a mistake, and that the wounded were two friends, and not bitter enemies, as they had thought : they then hastened to assist them ; but finding them senseless, as well as Theodora, who was still in a swoon, they

knew not how to act. Francisco was for only carrying away the lady, and leaving the gentlemen on the shore, where, in all probability, they would presently die, if they were not already dead. The renegado was not of that opinion; he said they must not desert the wounded, whose wounds, perhaps, were not mortal, and that he would dress them on board his vessel, where he had all the instruments of his first profession, which he had not forgot. Francisco gave in to this opinion.

‘As they were not ignorant how necessary it was to make haste, the renegado and the Navarrese, with the assistance of some slaves, bore to the boat the unfortunate widow de Cifuentes, with her two lovers, yet more unfortunate, than she. They presently got to their vessel, and as soon as they were all on board, some set the sails, whilst the others, kneeling on deck, implored the favour of heaven by the most fervent prayers that the fear of being pursued by Mezomorto’s vessel could suggest.

‘As for the renegado, after having intrusted the working of the vessel to a French slave that understood it perfectly, he gave his first attention to Donna Theodora; he restored her to the use of her senses, and succeeded so well with his remedies, that Don Fadrique and the Toledan also recovered their recollection.

‘The widow de Cifuentes, who had fainted away when she saw Don Juan stabbed, was much surprised at seeing Mendocce; and although to see him she must suppose that he had wounded himself through grief at having stabbed his friend, could not look on him but as the assassin of the man she loved.

‘It was the most moving thing in the world to see those three persons returned to their senses; the situation from which they had been just recovered, although similar to death, was not so deserving of pity. Donna Theodora viewed Don Juan with eyes in which were expressed all the emotions of a soul in the possession of grief and despair. And the two friends, heaving deep sighs, directed their dying looks to her.

‘After having for some time kept a silence as tender as dismal, Don Fadrique interrupted it; he addressed himself to the widow de Cifuentes: “Madam,” said he to her, “before I die I have the satisfaction of seeing you out of slavery. Would to heaven you owed your liberty to me; but it has ordained that you should be indebted for it to the lover you esteem. I love

this rival too well to murmur at it, and I hope the blow I have had the misfortune to give him may not prevent his enjoying your gratitude."

"The lady answered nothing to this speech. At that moment, far from being affected with the dreadful fate of Don Fadrique, she felt emotions of hatred for him inspired by the Toledan's situation.

"Meanwhile the surgeon was preparing to examine and probe the wounds. He began with that of Zarate: he did not find it dangerous, because the blow had only passed under the left pap, and had not injured any of the noble parts.

"The surgeon's report abated Donna Theodora's affliction, and occasioned much joy to Don Fadrique, who turned his head towards the lady. "I am satisfied," said he to her; "I resign my life without regret since my friend is out of danger; I shall not die charged with your hatred." He pronounced these words in so moving a manner, that the widow de Cifuentes was affected thereat.

"As she ceased to apprehend for Don Juan, she ceased to hate Don Fadrique; and seeing only in him a man deserving of all her pity, "Ah! Mendoce," answered she, actuated by a generous impulse, "suffer your wound to be dressed; perhaps it is not more considerable than your friend's. Attend to the care they wish to have of your life; live, if I cannot make you happy, at least I will not constitute the happiness of another; through compassion and friendship for you I will withhold the hand I intended giving to Don Juan. I make you the same sacrifice that he did."

"Don Fadrique was going to reply; but the surgeon, who feared lest he might make himself worse by speaking, obliged him to be silent, and examined his wound; it appeared to him to be mortal, the sword having penetrated into the upper part of the lungs, which he judged from the hemorrhage or loss of blood, the consequence of which was to be feared. As soon as he had applied the first dressing he left the gentlemen lying on two little beds in the cabin, and took Donna Theodora somewhere else, as he supposed her presence might be hurtful to them.

"Notwithstanding all these precautions, Mendoce got in a fever, and towards the close of the day the hemorrhage increased; the surgeon then assured him that the wound was

incurable, and informed him that if he had anything to say to his friend or Donna Theodora, he had no time to lose.

'This news caused unspeakable concern to the Toledan. As for Don Fadrique, he received it with apathy; he sent for the widow de Cifuentes, who came to him in a situation more easily conceived than expressed. Her face was covered with tears, and she sobbed so violently that Mendoce was much affected thereat.

"Madam," said he to her, "I am not deserving of the precious tears you shed, restrain them; I entreat you to hear me a moment. I make you the same request, my dear Zarate," added he, observing the extreme affection his friend expressed. "I well know that this separation must be severe to you; your friendship is too well known to me to doubt of it. But wait both of you till my death happen to honour it with so many marks of tenderness and pity. Suspend your affliction till then; I feel it more than the loss of life. Learn by what means fate, which pursues me, has this night conducted me to the fatal shore which I have stained with the blood of my friend and my own. You must be anxious to know how I could mistake Don Juan for Don Alvaro; I am going to inform you of it, if the little time I have to live permit me to give you this dreadful explanation.

"Some hours after the vessel in which I was had parted from that in which I had left Don Juan, we fell in with a French privateer which attacked us; he took the Tunisian vessel, and set us on shore near Alicant. I was no sooner liberated than I thought of redeeming my friend: for this purpose I repaired to Valencia, where I supplied myself with cash, and, on receiving accounts that there were at Barcelona some fathers of the redemption who were about sailing for Algiers, I went there; but before I left Valencia I entreated governor Don Francisco de Mendoce, my uncle, to make use of all the interest he might have at the Court of Spain to obtain Zarate's pardon, whom I intended to bring back with me, and to put in possession of his property, which has been confiscated since the Duke de Naxera's death.

"As soon as we arrived at Algiers I went to the places which the slaves frequent; but in vain I examined them all; I did not find him I was seeking for. I fell in with the Catalanian

renegado to whom this vessel belongs ; I knew him to be a man that had formerly been in my uncle's service ; I told him the motive of my journey ; and requested him to make a strict search for my friend. ' I am sorry,' answered he, ' that I cannot be useful to you ; I am to leave Algiers this night with a lady of Valencia, who is a slave to the Dey.' ' And what is that lady's name ?' said I. He answered her name was Theodora.

" The surprise I expressed at this intelligence informed the renegado beforehand that I was interested for this lady. He discovered to me the plan he had formed to release her from slavery, and as in his account he made mention of the slave Alvaro, I did not doubt its being Alvaro Ponce himself. ' Assist my resentment,' said I to the renegado with transport ; ' afford me the means of being revenged of my enemy.' ' You shall soon be gratified,' answered he, ' but first relate to me what you have against this Alvaro.'

" I acquainted him with our whole history, and when he had heard it, ' Enough,' said he, ' you have only to accompany me this night ; your rival shall be pointed out to you, and after having punished him, you shall take his place, and come with us to conduct Donna Theodora to Valencia.'

" Nevertheless my impatience did not make me forget Don Juan. I left money for his ransom in the hands of an Italian merchant, named Francisco Capati, who resides at Algiers, and who promised to redeem him, should he ever find him out. At length night came. I went to the renegado's, who led me to the sea-side ; we stopped before a little door, out of which came a man directly to us, who said, pointing to a man and woman that were behind him, ' there are Alvaro and Donna Theodora, following me.'

" At this sight I became outrageous, and, drawing my sword, I run to the unfortunate Alvaro, and, persuaded that it is an odious rival I am going to strike, I stab that faithful friend I was in search of. But, ' thank heaven,' added he, much affected, " my mistake will not cost him his life, nor everlasting sorrow to Donna Theodora."

" Ah ! Mendoce," interrupted the lady, " you do injustice to my affliction ; I shall never console myself for having lost you ; even though I marry your friend, it would only be to

unite our sorrows ; your love, your friendship, your misfortunes, would be our only topic."

"That is too much, madam," returned Don Fadrique ; "I do not deserve that you should regret me so long : permit Zarate to marry you, I entreat, after having revenged you of Alvaro Ponce."

"Don Alvaro is no more," said the widow de Cifuentes ; "the same day he carried me off, he was killed by the corsair that captured me."

"Madam," returned Mendoce, "that news pleases me ; my friend will be the sooner happy. Follow each of you your inclinations without reserve ; I see with joy the moment approaching that will remove the barrier your compassion and generosity have put to your mutual happiness ; may all your days glide in a quiet union which the jealousy of fortune dare not trouble. Farewell, madam ! farewell, Don Juan ! think sometimes both of you on a man who never loved anything so much as you."

'As the lady and the Toledan, instead of answering, redoubled their tears, Don Fadrique, who perceived it, and found himself very ill, continued thus : "I am too much agitated ; death already surrounds me, and I do not think of supplicating the Divine mercy to pardon me for having myself ended the course of a life which it alone should dispose of."

'Having finished these words, he lifted his eyes to heaven with all the appearance of a true repentance, and presently the hemorrhage occasioned a suffocation which carried him off.

'Don Juan then, actuated by his despair, puts his hand to the wound, tears off the bandage, wishes to render it incurable ; but Francisco and the renegado throw themselves on him, and oppose his fury. Theodora is terrified at this transport ; she assists the renegado and the Navarrese to divert Don Juan from his design : she speaks to him in so moving a manner that he returns to himself ; he suffers his wound to be bound up again, and at length the interest of the lover gradually dissipates the despair of the friend. But, in resuming his reason he made use of it only to prevent the delirious effects of his grief, and not to weaken the sensation of it.

'The renegado, who had, among other things he was carrying to Spain, excellent Arabian balsam, and precious perfumes,

embalmed Mendoce's body, at the request of Don Juan and Theodora, who expressed their wish to pay him the honours of interment at Valencia. They did not cease, both of them, to groan and sigh during the whole passage. It was not so with the rest of the crew; as the wind continued fair, they were not long before they made the coast of Spain.

'At this sight all the slaves gave themselves up to joy, and when the vessel was safe arrived at the port of Denia, every one took his measures. The widow de Cifuentes and the Toledan dispatched a courier to Valencia with letters for the governor, and for Donna Theodora's family. The news of this lady's return was received by all her relations with a great deal of joy. As for Don Francisco de Mendoce, he felt a heavy affliction when he heard of the death of his nephew.

'He fully expressed it, when, accompanied by the widow de Cifuentes, he repaired to Denia, and would behold the body of the unfortunate Don Fadrique. This good old man bedewed it with his tears, making such piteous lamentations that all the spectators were affected thereat. He asked by what adventure his nephew was in that situation.

"I am going to relate to you, Signior," said the Toledan; "far from seeking to erase it from my memory, I take a dismal pleasure in recalling it incessantly, and feeding my grief with it."

'He then told him how this fatal accident had happened, and this narration, drawing fresh tears from him, redoubled those of Don Francisco. With respect to Theodora, her relations expressed their joy at seeing her again, and congratulated her on the miraculous manner in which she had been delivered from the tyranny of Mezomorto.

'After a full explanation of everything, Don Fadrique's body was put into a coach and conducted to Valencia; but it was not interred there, as the term of Don Fadrique's viceroyalty being nearly expired, that nobleman was preparing to return to Madrid, where he resolved to carry his nephew.

'While the preparations were making for the procession, the widow de Cifuentes amply rewarded Francisco and the renegado. The Navarrese retired to his province, and the renegado returned with his mother to Barcelona, where he resumed Christianity, and where he now lives very comfortably. About this time

Don Francisco received a packet from Court, in which was Don Juan's pardon, which the king, notwithstanding the regard he had for the house of Naxera, could not refuse to all the Mendoces who were combined to ask it. This news was the more acceptable to the Toledan, as it procured him the liberty of accompanying his friend's body, which, without that, he durst not have done. At length the procession set out, followed by a great number of people of quality, and as soon as it arrived at Madrid, the body of Don Fadrique was interred in a church, where Zarate and Donna Theodora, with the permission of the Mendoces, had a magnificent monument erected to his memory. They did not stop there : they were mourning for their friend for a whole year, to eternize their grief and friendship.

'After having given such conspicuous marks of their tenderness for Mendoce, they were married, but by an inconceivable effect of the power of friendship, Don Juan could not but retain, for a long time, a melancholy which nothing could dissipate. Don Fadrique, his dear Don Fadrique, was ever present in his idea ; he every night saw him in dreams, and most frequently such as he had beheld him when resigning his last breath. His mind, however, was beginning to be delivered from those doleful images : Donna Theodora's charms, with which he was still impressed, gradually overcame the fatal recollection. Don Juan at length was going to live happy and content ; but a few days since he fell from his horse as he was hunting ; he fractured his skull ; an abscess was formed there ; the physicians have not been able to save him ; he is just dead, and Theodora, that lady whom you see in the arms of two women who are watching her phrenzy, may probably soon follow him.'

CHAPTER XIV.

OF DREAMS.

As soon as Asmodeo had finished relating this history, Don Cléofas said to him, 'That is a fine picture of friendship, but it is

rare to find men who love each other as much as Don Juan and Don Fadrique ; I believe it would be still more difficult to find two rival female friends that could so generously make a mutual sacrifice of an esteemed lover.'

'Doubtless,' answered the devil, 'that has never yet been seen, and perhaps will never be seen ; women do not love one another. We will suppose two perfectly intimate, even let them not speak ill of one another when absent, so great be their friendship ; you see them both ; you incline to one side ; madness takes the other : it is not because the angry one loves you, but because she would have the preference : such is the character of women ; they are too jealous of one another to be capable of friendship.'

'The history of two unparalleled friends,' returned Léandro Perez, 'is somewhat romantic, and has led us far. The night is far spent, we shall in a moment see the dawn of day ; I expect a fresh pleasure from you ; I perceive a great number of people asleep ; I should like, from curiosity, for you to tell me the several dreams they may have.'

'With all my heart,' answered the devil. 'You love shifting scenes ; I will gratify you.'

'I believe,' said Zambullo, 'that I am going to hear very ridiculous dreams.'

'Why,' returned the devil, 'you, who are master of Ovid, don't you know what that poet says, that it is towards daybreak that dreams are the most true, because at that time the soul is disengaged from alimentary vapours ?'

'As for me,' said Zambullo, 'whatever Ovid may say respecting it, I do not give any credit to dreams.'

'You are in the wrong,' returned Asmodeo ; 'you must neither consider them as chimeras, nor yet believe them all : they are liars that sometimes speak the truth. The Emperor Augustus, whose head was as good as a scholar's, did not despise dreams in which he was interested, and very luckily at the battle of Philippi he left his tent on hearing a dream related concerning him. I could give a thousand other instances which would convince you of your temerity, but I pass by them in order to gratify the fresh desire that actuates you.'

'Let us begin with that fine mansion on the right. The master of the house, whom you see in bed in that rich apart-

ment, is a liberal and gallant count. He is dreaming that he is at a theatre, where he hears a young actress sing. In the next apartment rests the countess, his wife, who is immoderately fond of play. She dreams that she has no money, and that she pawns some jewels at a jeweller's, who lends her three hundred pistoles for a handsome consideration.

'In the nearest house, on the same side, resides a marquis of the same character as the count. He is dreaming that he is borrowing a considerable sum, and his steward, in bed at the top of the house, is dreaming that he is growing rich as fast as his master is ruining himself. Well, what do you think of those dreams? do they appear extravagant to you?'

'No, faith,' answered Don Cléofas. 'I plainly see that Ovid is in the right, but I am desirous to know who is that man I remark; he has his whiskers in curl, and while asleep retains an air of gravity which makes me conclude that it cannot be a gentleman of the lower class.'

'It is a country gentleman,' answered the demon, 'an Arragonian viscount; a proud and haughty genius. His soul at this moment is swimming in joy; he dreams that he is with a great man, who gives him the precedency in a public ceremony. But I discover in the same house two brothers, physicians, who are having very mortifying dreams. One dreams that an edict is published, forbidding to pay physicians where they have not cured their patients; and his brother dreams that it is enacted that physicians shall wear mourning at the funeral of all the sick that shall die under their hands.'

'I could wish,' said Zambullo, 'that this last regulation were actual, and that a physician must attend the funeral of his patient as a sheriff attends in France at the execution of a culprit he has condemned.'

'I like the simile,' said the devil; 'it might be said, in such a case, that one is going to put his sentence in execution, and that the other has already executed his.'

'Oh! oh!' cried the scholar, 'what personage is that who is rubbing his eyes and getting up in haste?'

'It is a man of quality who is soliciting a government in Spain. A frightful dream has just awoken him; he dreamed that the prime minister looked cool on him. I likewise see a young lady that is awaking, and who is not pleased with a dream she

has just had. It is a girl of condition, as prudent as she is handsome, who has two lovers by whom she is beset. She loves one of them tenderly, and has an aversion for the other which amounts to loathing. She just now saw in a dream at her knees the lover she abhors.

'Direct your attention to the house the corner of this street. It is the abode of an attorney; there he is in bed with his wife, in the room where you see a suit of historical hangings, and two twin beds; he is dreaming that he is going to visit one of his clients in the alms-house, in order to assist him with his own money.'

'I hear snoring about us,' said Léandro Pérez, and I believe it is a stout man I perceive in a small dwelling-house next to the attorney's habitation.'

'Exactly,' said Asmodeo; 'it is a canon who dreams that he is saying his *benedicite*.'

'He has for neighbour a silk-mercier who sells his goods very dear, but on trust, to people of quality. There is owing to this mercier more than a hundred thousand ducats. He is dreaming that all his debtors are bringing him money; and his correspondents, on their part, are dreaming that he is on the verge of bankruptcy.'

'Those two dreams,' said the scholar, 'did not come out of the temple of sleep by the same door.'

'No, I assure you,' answered the demon; 'the first most certainly came through the ivory gate, and the second through the horn gate. The house adjoining to that of the mercier's is occupied by a famous bookseller. He has, not long ago, printed a book which has had a great run. At the publication of it he promised the author to give him fifty pistoles if he reprinted his work, and he actually is dreaming of making a second edition of it without informing him.'

'Oh, as for that dream,' said Zambullo, 'there is no need of asking through which door it came. I do not doubt of its having its full and complete effect. I know the booksellers. They make no bones of cheating authors.'

'Nothing is more true,' returned the cripple; 'but learn to know the authors. They are not more conscientious than the booksellers. A little adventure that happened at Madrid not a hundred years ago will convince you of it.'

‘Three booksellers were supping together at a tavern. The conversation turned on the scarcity of good new books. “My friends,” said one of the party, “I will tell you confidentially that I have made a fine bargain a few days ago. I have bought a copy which, indeed, cost me rather dear; but it is by an author. . . . It is worth its weight in gold.”

‘Another bookseller then spoke, and boasted also of having made an excellent purchase the day before.

“And I, gentlemen,” cried the third in his turn, “will not be backward in confidence with you. I am going to show you the pearl of manuscripts. I made the fortunate purchase to-day.”

‘At the same time each of them took out of his pocket the precious copy he said he had purchased; and as it appeared that it was a new theatrical piece entitled “The Wandering Jew,” they were much surprised when they found that it was the same work that had been separately sold to all of them.

‘I discover in another house,’ continued the devil, ‘a timid and respectful lover who has just awoke. He loves a widow of the smartest kind. He dreamed that he was with her at the bottom of a wood, where he was making use of tender discourses, and that she answered, “Ah, how cajoling you are. You might persuade me, were I not on my guard against mankind; but they are deceivers; I don’t trust to their words. I must have actions.”

“Ah, what actions do you require of me, madam?” returned the lover. “Must I undertake the twelve labours of Hercules in order to convince you of the violence of my love?”

“Ah, no, Don Nicaise,” answered the lady; “I do not require so much from you.” Whereon he awoke.’

‘Pray inform me,’ said the scholar, ‘why that man in the brown bed is struggling like a madman.’

‘It is,’ answered the cripple, ‘an able licentiate, who has a dream with which he is terribly agitated. He dreams that he is disputing, and sustaining the immortality of the soul against a little doctor of physic, who is as good a Catholic as he is a physician. On the second floor at the licentiate’s lodges a gentleman of Estremadura, named Baltazar Farifarronico, who came post to Court to solicit a reward for having killed a Portuguese with a musket-shot. Do you know what he is dreaming? He dreams that the government of Antiquera is given to him, and yet he is not satisfied; he thinks he deserves a viceroyalty.

I discover in the lodging-house two persons of consequence, who are having very disagreeable dreams. One, who is governor of a strong place, dreams that he is besieged in his fortress, and that after a slight resistance he is obliged to surrender with his garrison, prisoners of war.

'The other is Bishop of Murcia. The Court has chosen this eloquent prelate to preach the funeral sermon of a princess, and he is to deliver it in two days. He dreams that he is in the pulpit, and that he is quite at a loss after the exordium of his discourse.'

'It is not impossible that this accident may actually befall him,' said Don Cléofas.

'No, indeed,' answered the devil; 'and it is not long since it happened to his Highness on a like occasion.'

'Shall I show you a person walking in his sleep? You have only to look into the stables of that house. What do you see there?'

'I perceive,' said Léandro Pérez, 'a man in his shirt, walking and holding a currycomb in his hand, methinks.'

'Well,' resumed the demon, 'it is an ostler, who is asleep. He is accustomed to get out of his bed every night, and to curry his horses while fast asleep, after which he goes to bed again. It is believed in that house that it is the work of a fairy, and the ostler believes it like the rest. In a great house opposite the lodging-house lives an old knight of the Golden Fleece, who has been formerly viceroy of Mexico. He is fallen sick, and is apprehensive of dying. His viceroyalty begins to trouble him; he has, indeed, exercised it in a manner that justifies his uneasiness. The records of New Spain do not make honourable mention of him. He has just had a dream, the horror of which is not yet dissipated, and which, perhaps, may be the occasion of his death.'

'This must then be a very extraordinary dream,' said Zambullo.

'You shall hear it,' returned Asmodeo; 'there is, indeed, something singular in it. This nobleman dreamed just now that he was in the valley of the dead, where all the Mexicans who have been the victims of his injustice and cruelty were come to fall on him, loading him with reproach and insults. They were even going to tear him in pieces, but he took to flight and

escaped from their fury. After which he found himself in a great hall hung with black cloth, where he saw his father and grandfather sitting at a table on which were three covers. Those two sorrowful guests beckoned him to come near them, and his father said to him, with all the solemnity of the dead, "We have expected thee a long while; come and take thy place with us."

'The rascally dream,' cried the scholar; 'I forgive the sick man for having his mind oppressed with it.'

'In return,' said the cripple, 'his niece, in bed in an apartment over his, is spending the night deliciously; sleep presents to her the most agreeable ideas. It is a maiden of twenty-five to thirty years old, ugly and ill-shaped. She dreams that her uncle, whose sole heiress she is, is no more; and that she sees around her a crowd of amiable noblemen, who are contending for the glory of pleasing her.'

'If I am not mistaken,' said Don Cléofas, 'I hear laughing behind us.'

'You are not deceived,' returned the devil. 'It is a woman who is laughing in her sleep, two steps from this; a widow who plays the prude, and loves nothing so much as detraction. She dreams that she is conversing with an old devotee, whose conversation gives her much pleasure.'

'I laugh in my turn at seeing in a room above that woman, a cit who is much pinched to live decently on the little property he is master of. He dreams that he is gathering pieces of gold and silver, and the more he gathers the more he finds to gather. He has already filled a large box with them.'

'Poor fellow!' said Léandro, 'he will not long enjoy his treasure.'

'When he awakes,' returned the cripple, 'he will be like a truly rich man that is dying; he will see all his riches vanish. If you are desirous to know the dreams of those two actresses who are neighbours, I will tell you them. One dreams she is catching birds with a call; that she plucks them as fast as she catches them; but that she gives them to a handsome great cat to devour, which she dotes on, and which has all the benefit of them. The other dreams that she is driving away greyhounds and Danish dogs, which have long been her favourites, and that she will only keep a little lap-dog of the prettiest kind, to which she has taken a fancy.'

'Those are two very idle dreams,' cried the scholar. 'I believe that were there at Madrid, as heretofore at Rome, interpreters of dreams, they would be very much puzzled to explain that one.'

'Not much,' answered the devil; 'were they but acquainted with what passes now-a-days in the comic world, they would soon find a clear and true sense of it.'

'As for me, I do not understand it,' replied Don Cléofas, 'and I care very little about it. I had rather know who that lady is who is sleeping in a magnificent bed of yellow velvet, trimmed with silver fringe, and near whom there is, on a stand, a book and taper?'

'It is a titled lady,' answered the demon, 'who has a very spruce equipage. One of her customs is to read in bed, without which she could not close her eyes all night. Last night she read Ovid's "Metamorphoses," and that is the occasion of her having, at this moment, a dream, in which there is a great deal of extravagance. She dreams that Jupiter is in love with her.'

'Now we are speaking of this metamorphosis, here is another, which seems to me more laughable. I perceive a player who, in a sound sleep, is tasting the sweets of a dream which flatters him agreeably. This actor is so old that there is not a man living in Madrid who can say he saw his first appearance. He has been so long on the stage that he is, in a manner, theatrified. He has abilities, and is so vain of them that he imagines a person like himself is superior to a man. Do you know what this haughty hero of scenery is dreaming? He dreams that he is dead, and that he sees all the divinities of Olympus assembled in order to determine what they ought to do with a mortal of his consequence. He hears Mercury representing to the council of gods that this famous comedian, after having had the honour of so often personating Jupiter and the other principal deities on the stage, should not be subjected to the common lot of mankind, and that he is worthy of being received into the celestial assembly. Momus approves of Mercury's opinion, but some other gods and goddesses oppose the proposition of so novel an apotheosis; and Jupiter, to reconcile them all, changes the old comedian into a scene.'

The devil was going to proceed, but Zambullo interrupted

him, saying, 'Stop there, Signior Asmodeo ; you don't take notice that it is day. I am afraid we shall be perceived on the top of this house. If the rabble should once observe your lordship we will hear shoutings that will not end very soon.'

'We shall not be seen,' answered the demon. 'I have the same power as those fabulous divinities I have just been speaking of; and as on Mount Ida the amorous son of Saturn concealed himself with a cloud, I am going to form around us a thick vapour which the sight of man cannot penetrate, and which will not hinder you seeing the things I may point out to you.'

Actually they were suddenly surrounded with a smoke which, though of the most opaque, did not conceal anything from the scholar's eyes.

'Let us return to the dreams,' continued the cripple. 'But I do not consider,' added he, 'that the manner in which I have made you spend the night has fatigued you. I am for carrying you home and letting you rest for some hours ; in the mean time I am going to survey the four parts of the world, and play some tricks of my profession ; after which I will return to you to amuse myself on fresh matters.'

'I have no inclination to sleep, and am not tired,' answered Don Cléofas. Instead of leaving me, do me the favour of informing me of the different pursuits of those persons I see already up, and who are preparing to go out, methinks. What are they going to do so early ?'

'What you wish to know,' returned the demon, 'is a thing worthy of observation. You are going to see a picture of the cares, the emotions, the trouble poor mortals take, during this life, to fill up, as agreeably as possible, the small space there is between their birth and their death.'

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH MAY BE SEEN SEVERAL ORIGINALS, WHICH ARE NOT
WITHOUT COPIES.

‘LET us first observe that gang of beggars you see already in the street. Those are libertines, the greater part of good families, who live in common like monks, and spend almost every night in tippling in their houses, where there is always an ample supply of bread, meat, and wine. There they are going to disperse, in order to go and play their part in the churches; and this evening they will gather together to drink the health of those charitable persons who piously contributed to their expeditures. Admire, I pray, how these knaves know how to place and distort themselves, in order to excite pity; coquettes are not better versed in adjusting themselves to inspire love.

‘Take particular notice of the three that are going together on the same side. The one who supports himself on crutches makes his whole body tremble, and appears to walk with so much difficulty, that at every step he takes you would suppose he is going to fall on his nose. Although he has a long white beard, and a decrepit air, he is a young man, so nimble and active, that he could outrun a deer in a chase. The other, who counterfeits a scaldhead, is a handsome youth, whose head is covered with a skin that conceals a head of hair fit for a page at Court. And the other, that hobbles along in a bowl, is a wag, that has the art of sending from his lungs such lamentable sounds, that at his sorrowful accents there is not an old woman that does not come down from the fourth story to bring him a maravedi.

‘Whilst those idlers are going under the mask of poverty to catch the money of the public, I notice also industrious artisans, although Spaniards, that are preparing to earn their bread by the sweat of their bodies; I perceive on all sides men getting up and dressing themselves, in order to go to their different occupations. How many plans formed this night are going to be executed, or frustrated, to-day! How many procedures of interest, of love, and ambition are going to be made!

'That young bachelor, who is going by and walking very fast, makes a practice of going every morning to make his court to an old canon, his uncle, whose prebend he has a design upon. Observe in that house facing us, a man that is putting on his clothes, and preparing to go out : it is a respectable and rich citizen, who is perplexed with a very serious affair. He has an only daughter, marriageable ; he does not know if he had best give her to a young attorney, who is courting her, or to a vain *Hector*, who demands her. He is going to consult his friends respecting it ; and actually there is nothing more perplexing. He is afraid, if he choose the gentleman, of having a son-in-law that will despise him ; and he is apprehensive, if he prefer the attorney, of bringing into his house a worm that will destroy all the furniture.

'Take notice of a neighbour of that perplexed father, and observe in that dwelling-house in which is elegant furniture, a man in a night-gown of red brocade, with gold flowers ; it is a choice spirit, who plays the nobleman, notwithstanding his low extraction. Ten years ago he was not worth twenty maravedis, and he at present enjoys an income of ten thousand ducats. He has a very handsome equipage, but he deducts the expense of it from his table, the economy of which is such that he makes banyan days when alone ; he sometimes, however, through ostentation, entertains people of quality.' To-day he gives a dinner to some counsellors of state ; and for this end he has just sent for a confectioner and a cook ; he is going to bargain with them penny by penny, after which he will write on cards the courses agreed on.'

'You tell me of a great scamp,' said Zambullo.

'Ah ! yes,' answered Asmodeo ; 'all beggars that fortune suddenly enriches become misers or prodigals ; that is the rule.'

'Inform me,' said the scholar, 'who is that pretty lady whom I see at her toilet, conversing with a very handsome gentleman.'

'Ah ! truly,' cried the cripple, 'what you see there is worthy of your attention. That woman is a German widow, who lives at Madrid on her dowry, and keeps very good company ; and the young man who is with her is a nobleman, named Don Antonio de Monsalvo. Although this gentleman is of one of the first families in Spain he has promised the widow to marry her,

and has even annexed a penalty of three thousand pistoles to the failure ; but he is crossed in his love by his relations, who threaten to have him confined if he does not break off all connection with the German lady, whom they consider as a fortune-huntress. The lover, mortified at seeing them all opposed to his inclination, came yesterday evening to his mistress, who, perceiving he had some uneasiness, asked the reason of it. He communicated it to her, assuring her that all the opposition he should meet with from his family could never shake his constancy. The widow seemed charmed with his firmness, and they parted at midnight very well satisfied with each other. Monsalvo returned this morning ; he found the lady at her toilet, and he began afresh to tell her of his love. During the conversation the German lady took out her curling papers ; the gentleman took up one thoughtlessly, unfolded it, and seeing his handwriting, "How then, madame," said he laughing. "Is that the use of the billet-doux I send you ?" "Yes, Monsalvo," answered she, "you see what use I make of the promises of lovers who will marry me in opposition to their relations." When the gentleman found that it was actually his bond that the lady had torn, he could not help admiring the disinterestedness of his widow, and he again swore to her eternal fidelity.

'Cast your eyes,' continued the devil, 'on that great dry-looking man who is passing below us ; he has a great register under his arm, an inkstand hanging to his girdle, and a guitar on his back.'

'That personage,' said the scholar, 'has a very laughable appearance ; I would wager that he is an original.'

'It is certain,' returned the demon, 'that he is a curious mortal. There are cynic philosophers in Spain ; he is one of them ; he is going towards the Buen Retiro, to station himself in a meadow, where there is a clear fountain, the pure water of which forms a rivulet that winds among the flowers. He will remain there all day long, contemplating the riches of nature, playing the guitar, and making reflections, which he will set down in his register. He has his ordinary food in his pocket, that is, some onions and a piece of bread ; such is the temperate life he has led for ten years ; and were any Aristippus to say to him, as to Diogenes, "Didst thou know how to pay thy court to the great, thou wouldst not eat onions," this moderate philo-

sopher would answer him, "I would pay my court to the great as well as thyself, were I willing to debase the man so far as to make him cringe to another."

'Indeed, that philosopher has formerly been attached to great noblemen; they even made his fortune. But having felt that their friendship for him was but an honourable servitude, he broke off all connections with them. He had a coach, which he gave up because he reflected that he splashed people that were more deserving than he; he even gave almost all his property to his indigent friends. He only reserved wherewith to live in the manner he does; for it does not seem less debasing for a philosopher to beg his bread from plebeians than from noblemen.

'Commiserate the gentleman that is following that philosopher, and is attended by a dog; he may boast of being of one of the best houses in Castille. He has been rich, but he ruined himself, like the Timon of Lucian, by entertaining his friends every day, and especially by grand feasts on birthdays, marriages of princes and princesses; in a word, on every occasion Spain has had for rejoicing. As soon as the parasites found it was low water with him, they deserted his house; all his friends forsook him. One only remained faithful to him: it is his dog.'

'The shops are all open,' said the scholar, 'and I already perceive a gentleman going into a cookshop.'

'That gentleman,' returned Asmodeo, 'is a young fellow of a good family, who is possessed with the mania of writing, and of resolving to pass for an author. He does not want for genius; he even has enough to criticise all the works that appear on the stage; but he has not sense sufficient to compose a sensible one. He is going into the cookshop to order a great repast; he gives a dinner to-day to four comedians, whom he wishes to engage to protect a bad piece of his fabrication, which he is on the eve of presenting to their company.

'Speaking of authors,' continued he, 'there are two meeting in the street. Observe how they salute each other with a sarcastic smile; they despise each other, and they are in the right. The one writes as easily as the poet Crispinus, whom Horace compares to a forge bellows; and the other spends a deal of time in writing cold and insipid works.'

'Who is that little man that is getting out of a coach at that door?' said Zambullo.

'It is a personage worthy of notice,' answered the cripple. 'Not ten years ago he quitted the office of a notary, whose head clerk he was, in order to throw himself into the Carthusian Monastery at Saragossa. At the end of six months' noviciate he left his convent and appeared at Madrid; but those who knew him were surprised to see him become on a sudden one of the principal members of the Council of the Indies. This sudden fortune is spoken of to this day. Some say that he has sold himself to the devil; others will have it he has been beloved by a rich dowager; and others, in short, that he has found a treasure.'

'You know the reason of it,' interrupted Don Cléofas.

'Oh, indeed I do,' returned the demon, 'and I am going to explain the mystery. Whilst our monk was a novice it happened one day, that digging a deep trench in his garden, in order to plant a tree in it, he perceived a copper box, which he opened; there was in it a gold box, which contained thirty diamonds of great beauty. Although the friar was no connoisseur in jewellery, he readily imagined that he had made a fine haul; and, taking the same course that Crispus does in a comedy of Plautus, who quits fishing after having found a treasure, he threw off the habit and returned to Madrid, where, with the assistance of a jeweller, a friend of his, he converted his precious stones into pieces of gold, and those pieces of gold into an employment which gives him an elevated situation in civil society.'

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT MORE THINGS THE DEVIL EXHIBITED TO DON CLÉOFAS.

'I MUST make you laugh,' continued Asmodeo, 'by relating to you an anecdote of that man who is going into a tavern. It is a Biscayan physician; he is going to take a dish of chocolate, after which he will spend the whole day in playing at chess.

During that time fear nothing for his patients; he has none, and although he had, the time he spends in play would not be the worse for them. He does not fail to go every night to a handsome and rich widow's, whom he would wish to marry, and with whom he pretends to be very much smitten. When he is with her, a knave of a valet, all the servant he has, and with whom he plays booty, brings him a fictitious list, containing the names of several persons of quality by whom the doctor has been sent for. The widow construes it all literally, and our chess-player is on the eve of winning the game.'

'I do not ask,' said Léandro Pérez, 'where those noblemen are going whom I see in their carriages; they are, without doubt, going to the king's levée.'

'You have hit it,' returned the devil; 'and if you wish to go there also, I will conduct you. We will make some very pleasing observations there.'

'You cannot propose anything more agreeable to me,' answered Zambullo. 'I anticipate the pleasure of it.'

The demon, eager to gratify Don Cléofas, then carried him towards the king's palace; but before they got there the scholar, perceiving artificers at work at a very high gate, asked if they were building the portals of a church.

'No,' answered Asmodeo, 'it is the gate of a new market; it is magnificent, as you see. However, were they to raise it to the clouds, it will never be worthy of the two Latin verses which are to be put on it.'

'What do you tell me?' cried Don Cléofas. 'What an idea you give me of those two verses; I am impatient to hear them.'

'Here they are,' returned the devil; 'be prepared to admire them.'

Quam bene Mercurius nunc merces vendit opimas,
Momo ubi fatuos vendidit ante sales!

There is in those two verses the prettiest pun in the world.'

'I do not yet feel all their beauty,' said the scholar. 'I do not rightly understand what is meant by those *fatuos sales*.'

'You don't know, then,' answered the devil, 'that the square on which they are building this market for the sale of merchandise, was formerly a college of monks who taught youth the humanities. The teachers of this college caused to be repre-

sented there, by their scholars, dramas and insipid theatrical pieces, internixed with such grotesque interludes, that you might see there even to dancing *Preterits* and *Supines*.'

'Oh! tell me no further,' interrupted Zambullo; 'I well know what trash college pieces are. I think the inscription is admirable.'

Asinodeo and Don Cléofas were scarcely on the steps of the king's palace, when they saw several courtiers going up. As these noblemen passed by them the devil acted the nomenclator. 'There,' said he to Léandro Pérez, pointing them out one after the other, 'that is the Count de Villalonsa, of the house of la Peubla d'Ellerena; that is the Marquis de Castro Fueste; that one is Don Lopez de los Rios, president of the Council of the Finances; this one, the Count de Villa Hombrosa.'

He not only named them, he made their eulogium; but this arch spirit always added to it some satirical observation. He gave every one of them a rub.

'That nobleman,' said he of one, 'is affable and obliging; he listens to you with an air of kindness. Do you solicit his protection, he very generously grants it, and offers you his credit. It is a pity that a man who is fond of pleasing should have so short a memory, that in a quarter of an hour after you have spoken to him, he forgets all you have said.'

'That duke,' said he, speaking of another, 'is a nobleman of the Court, of an exalted character; he is not like the greater part of his class, changing his mind every moment; there is no caprice or inequality in his disposition: add to it that he does not repay with ingratitude the attachment one may have for his person, or the service one renders him: but unfortunately he is very slow to acknowledge them. He suffers people to desire so long what they expect from him, that they think they have dearly paid for it when obtained.'

After the demon had informed the scholar of the good and bad qualities of a great many noblemen, he led him into an ante-chamber in which were men of all ranks, and especially so many knights, that Don Cléofas cried out, 'How many knights! Faith, there must be a great many of them in Spain!'

'I will answer for that,' said the cripple; 'and that is not surprising, as to be a knight of St Jago, or of Calatrava, it is not requisite, as heretofore, to become a Roman knight to have

an estate of twenty-five thousand crowns ; and, indeed, it is evident that it is a very mixed commodity.

'Take notice,' continued he, 'of that flat phiz behind you.'

'Speak lower,' interrupted Zambullo ; 'that man hears you.'

'No, no,' answered the devil. 'The same charm that renders us invisible prevents their hearing us. Observe that figure ; it is a Catalonian who has returned from the Philippine Isles, where he was a buccaneer. Would you say, to see him, that he is a thunderbolt of war ? Nevertheless, he has done some prodigious actions of valour ; he is going this morning to present a petition to the king, but I am very dubious of his obtaining it, as he did not, in the first place, address himself to the prime minister.'

'I see to the right of that buccaneer,' said Léandro Pérez, a stout and hale man, that seems of great importance : were one to judge of his situation from the pride of his deportment, it must be some rich nobleman.'

'He is nothing less than that,' answered Asmodeo ; 'it is a Hector of the poorest order, who, for a livelihood, keeps a gaming house under the patronage of a great man.'

'But I observe a licentiate deserving of being pointed out to you : it is he whom you see near the first window, conversing with a gentleman dressed in light grey velvet. They are speaking of an affair that was yesterday determined by the king ; I will relate it to you.'

'About two months ago this licentiate, who is a member of the Academy of Toledo, published a book on moral philosophy that disgusted all the old Castilian authors : they found it full of too bold expressions, and words too modern. They combine against this singular production ; they meet and draw up a petition, which they present to the king, praying him to condemn this book, as being contrary to the purity and correctness of the Spanish tongue. The petition appeared to his Majesty to be worthy of notice ; he nominated three commissioners to examine the work ; they concluded that the title of it was indeed censurable ; and, the more dangerous as it was more brilliant. On their verdict, the king determined in this manner : he commanded, under pain of disobedience, that those academicians of Toledo who write in the style of the licentiate shall in future compose no more books ; and that even, the better to preserve the purity of

the Castilian tongue, those academicians cannot be replaced, after their death, but by persons of the first quality.'

'That is a wonderful decision,' cried Zambullo, laughing; 'the partisans of the ordinary language have nothing more to fear.'

'Pardon me,' replied the demon; 'the authors inimical to that noble simplicity, which is so pleasing to sensible readers, are not all of the Academy of Toledo.'

Don Cléofas was desirous to know who the gentleman was dressed in light grey velvet, whom he saw in conversation with the licentiate.

'It is,' answered the cripple, 'a Catalonian younger brother, an officer in the Spanish guards. I assure you he is a very sensible fellow. In order to give you an idea of his wit, I will repeat to you a repartee he made to a lady yesterday, in very good company. But, to understand this bon-mot, you must know that he has a brother named Don Andre de Prado, who was, some years ago, like him, an officer in the same corps.

'It happened one day that a huge farmer of the king's domains accosted this Don Andre, and said to him, "Signior de Prado, I bear the same name as you, but our families are different; I know that you are of one of the best houses in Catalonia, and at the same time that you are not very rich. As for me, I am rich, and of a birth not very illustrious: might there not be some means of imparting our advantages to each other? Have you letters of nobility?" Don Andre replied that he had. "That being the case," returned the farmer, "if you will communicate them to me, I will put them into the hands of a dexterous genealogist, who will set to work at them, and make us relations, in spite of our ancestors. On my side, by way of acknowledgment, I will make you a present of thirty thousand pistoles. Is it a bargain?" Don Andre was dazzled with the sum; he accepted the offer, intrusted his parchments to the farmer, and with the money he received from it, bought a considerable estate in Catalonia, where he resides since that time.

'Now his younger brother, who got nothing by this bargain, was yesterday at a table where Signior de Prado, farmer of the king's domains, was accidentally spoken of; whereupon a lady in company, speaking to this young officer, asked him if he were

not related to that farmer. "No, madam," answered he, "I have not that honour: it is my brother."

The scholar burst out laughing at this repartee, which seemed to him very droll. Then suddenly perceiving a little man following a courtier, he cried out, 'Good God, what bows the little man makes who is following the nobleman! He has, without doubt, some favour to request of him.'

'What you there observe,' returned the devil, 'is well worth while I should tell you the reason of those civilities. That little man is a respectable citizen, who has a very handsome house in the neighbourhood of Madrid, situated where there are mineral waters, which are in repute. He has let that house for three months, rent free, to that nobleman who has been drinking the waters there. The cit, at this present time, is very earnestly entreating the said nobleman to assist him in an affair that occurs, and the nobleman very politely refuses to serve him.'

'I must not let pass that gentleman of plebeian descent, who is pushing through the crowd, assuming the man of rank. He is become excessively rich in a short time, by the science of numbers: there are in his house as many servants as in a nobleman's; and his table exceeds that of a minister in delicacy and profusion. He has an equipage for himself, one for his wife, and another for his children. There are in his stables the finest mules and horses in the world; he even bought a few days ago, and paid cash for, an elegant set of harness, for which the Prince of Spain had been bargaining, and thought it too dear.'

'What insolence!' cried Léandro; 'a Turk who would see that original in so affluent circumstances would certainly believe him to be on the eve of undergoing some dreadful reverse of fortune.'

'I am ignorant of futurity,' said Asmodeo, 'yet I cannot but think like the Turk.'

'Ah! what do I see?' continued the demon with surprise. 'I almost disbelieve the evidence of my eyes! I perceive in the ante-chamber a poet that ought not to be there. How dare he show himself after having made some verses which are offensive to some Spanish grandees? He must rely very much on their contempt for him.'

'Observe attentively that respectable personage who is coming in leaning on a gentleman. Take notice how, as if through

respect, everybody falls back to make room for him. It is Signior Don Joseph de Reynaste and Ayala, first judge of the police; he is coming to give an account to the king of what has happened this night in Madrid. Observe that good man with admiration.'

'Truly,' said Zambullo, 'he has the appearance of a worthy man.'

'It were to be wished,' resumed the cripple, 'that all the corregidores took pattern from him. He is not one of those violent dispositions that act only through whim and impetuosity; he will not have a man arrested on the bare report of an alguazil, a secretary, or a deputy. He knows too well that this description of people have, for the most part, mercenary dispositions, and are capable of making a shameful traffic of their authority.'

'Wherefore, when it is in agitation to imprison a culprit he himself investigates the accusation, until he discovers the truth: nor does he even send innocent persons to prison; he only puts the guilty there, and will not even abandon them to the cruelty which reigns in dungeons. He goes himself to visit those wretches, and takes care to prevent the addition of inhumanity to the just rigour of the laws.'

'An exalted character!' cried Léandro Pérez, 'amiable man! I should like to hear him speak to the king.'

'I am very much mortified,' answered the devil, 'at being obliged to tell you that I cannot gratify this new wish without exposing myself to receive an insult. I am not allowed to approach sovereigns; it would be encroaching on the rights of Leviathan, Belphegor, and Astaroth. I have already told you that those three spirits have the privilege of besetting princes: it is forbid for other devils to appear in Court, and I don't know what I was thinking of when I took it in my head to bring you here: it is, I must confess, a very rash procedure. Were these three devils to perceive me, they would come and fall on me furiously, and, between you and I, I should not be the strongest.'

'As that is the case,' replied the scholar, 'let us withdraw quickly from this palace. I should be very much grieved to see you worried by your brethren without being able to assist you; for, were I to have a hand in the fray, I believe it would be of little service to you.'

'No, indeed,' replied Asmodeo, 'they would not feel your blows, and you would perish under theirs.'

'But,' added he, 'to console you for my not having admitted you into the closet of your great monarch, I am going to procure you a pleasure equivalent to the one you relinquish.'

Thus saying, he took Don Cléofas by the hand, and cleft the air with him towards la Merci.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE CAPTIVES.

THEY both stopped on a house near that monastery, at the gate of which there was a great concourse of people of both sexes.

'What a crowd!' said Léandro Pérez. 'What ceremony draws all these people here?'

'It is,' answered the demon, 'a ceremony you have never seen, although it happens every now and then in Madrid. Three hundred slaves, all subjects of the King of Spain, will be here in a moment: they are returned from Algiers, where the fathers of the redemption have been to redeem them. All the streets through which they are to pass will be thronged with spectators.'

'It is true,' replied Zambullo, 'that I have not hitherto been desirous to see such a sight; and if it be that your Highness has in store for me, I'll tell you candidly, that you ought not to raise my expectations so much.'

'I am too well acquainted with you,' answered the devil, 'not to know that it is not an agreeable amusement for you to observe such wretchedness; but when you are informed, that in pointing them out I intend explaining the remarkable circumstances there are in the captivity of some, and the perplexity of others on returning home, I am persuaded you will not be displeased at my giving you that entertainment.'

'Oh no! As to that,' returned the scholar, 'what you say

alters the matter, and you will give me a real pleasure by keeping your promise.'

Whilst they were conversing in this manner, they all at once heard great shouts made by the populace at the appearance of the captives, who proceeded in this order: they walked two and two in their slave dress, each having his chain on his shoulders. A pretty large number of friars of la Merci, who had met them, were at their head, mounted on mules caparisoned with black stuff, as though they were conducting a funeral procession; and one of these good fathers bore the banner of the redemption. The youngest captives were at the head, the old ones followed them, and behind them appeared, on a little horse, a friar of the same order as the first, who had the appearance of a prophet; in fact, he was the president of the mission. He drew the eyes of all the spectators by his gravity, as also by a long grey beard, which made him look venerable; and one could read in the countenance of this Spanish Moses the inexpressible joy he experienced at bringing so many Christians back to their native country.

'Those captives,' said the cripple, 'are not all alike pleased at having recovered their liberty. If there be any among them who are overjoyed at being on the point of seeing their relations again, there are others who are apprehensive of hearing that during their absence some circumstances have happened in their families more dreadful to them than slavery.'

'For instance, the two that walked first are in the last predicament. One of them, native of the little town of Velilla, in Arragon, after having been ten years in the servitude of the Turks, without ever hearing from his wife, will find her married a second time, and mother of five children. The other, son of a woollen-draper of Segovia, was carried off by a Corsair near twenty years ago. He is apprehensive that his family may be much altered in so many years, and his fears are not groundless: his father and mother are dead, and his brothers, who have divided all the property, have spent it all by their bad conduct.'

'I observe a slave with attention,' said the scholar, 'and I conclude, from his air, that he is delighted with no longer being exposed to the bastinado.'

'The captive you notice,' answered the devil, 'has great reason to rejoice in his deliverance: he knows that an aunt,

whose sole heir he is, is just dead, and that he is going to enjoy a handsome fortune ; that employs his thoughts agreeably, and gives him that air of satisfaction you observe in him. It is not the same with the unfortunate gentleman who is walking at his side ; a painful uneasiness incessantly troubles him, and for this reason ; when he was captured by an Algerian pirate, on his passage from Spain to Italy, he loved a lady, and was beloved by her ; he is afraid, that while he was in slavery the fidelity of his fair one has not been unshaken.'

'And has he long been a slave ?' said Zambullo.

'Eighteen months,' answered Asmodeo.

'Ah ! faith,' returned Léandro Pérez, 'I believe that lover gives way to a groundless fear ; he has not put his lady's constancy to a test sufficiently strong for him to be so much alarmed.'

'In that you are deceived,' returned the cripple ; 'his princess no sooner heard that he was a captive in Barbary, than she provided herself with another lover. Would you say,' continued the demon, 'that the personage who immediately follows the two we have just taken notice of, and whom a thick red beard renders frightful to behold, was a very handsome man ? Nothing, however, is more true ; and you see in that hideous figure the hero of a very singular history, which I am going to relate to you.'

'That great fellow is named Fabricio ; he was scarce fifteen years old when his father, a rich husbandman of Cinquello, a large town of the kingdom of Leon, died, and he also lost his mother a short time after ; so that being the only son, he became master of a considerable property, the care of which was intrusted to one of his uncles, an honest man. Fabricio finished his studies, already commenced at Salamanca. He there afterwards learned to ride, to fence ; in a word, he neglected none of those things that could concur in making him worthy of being favourably beheld by Donna Hypolita, sister of a private gentleman, who had his cottage about two gunshots from Cinquello.'

'This lady was perfectly handsome, and nearly of the same age as Fabricio, who, having seen her in his infancy, had imbibed with his milk, to use the expression, the love he entertained for her. Hypolita, on her side, took notice that he was not deformed ; but knowing him to be the son of a husbandman,

she did not deign to view him with much attention : she was insufferably haughty, as well as her brother Don Thomas de Xaral, who, perhaps, had not his fellow in Spain for being indigent, and puffed up with his nobility.

'This haughty country gentleman lived in a house which he called his castle, and which was, properly speaking, but a heap of rubbish, it was so near falling down on all sides. Nevertheless, although his circumstances did not permit him to put it in repair, although he had barely a support, yet he must have a valet to attend him, and, besides, there was a Moorish woman to attend his sister. It was laughable to see Don Thomas appear in town on holidays and Sundays, with a coat of crimson velvet quite thread-bare, and a little hat, ornamented with an old yellow feather, which he preserved at home like relics, the remainder of the week. Decked with these tatters, which seemed to him so many vouchers of his noble extraction, he assumed the nobleman, and though he sufficiently repaid the low bows that were made him, when he condescended to return a look. His sister was not less elated than he with the antiquity of her family, and to this folly, added that of being so vain of her beauty, that she lived in the glorious hope that some great nobleman would come and ask her in marriage.

'Such were the characters of Don Thomas and Hypolita. Fabricio knew it well ; and in order to ingratiate himself with two such highflown personages, he took the method of flattering their vanity by feigned respect, which he did with so much cleverness, that the brother and sister at length thought fit that he should have the honour of going frequently to pay his homage to them. As he was not less acquainted with their indigence than with their pride, he every day wished to offer them his purse ; but the fear of arousing their haughtiness against him prevented it ; however, his ingenious generosity found out a method of assisting them without putting them to the blush. "Signior," said he one day, in private, to the gentleman, "I have two thousand ducats to make a deposit of. Be so kind as to keep them for me ; let me be under that obligation to you."

'It was not necessary to ask if Xaral consented to it ; besides being very bare of cash, he had the conscience of a trustee. He willingly took charge of this sum. He no sooner had it in his hands than he laid out without hesitation a good proportion

of it in repairing his cottage, and furnishing himself with every little convenience. A new coat of very handsome blue velvet was purchased and made at Salamanca, and a green feather, bought there, came to usurp from the yellow one the glory of which it had been in possession immemorial, of adorning Don Thomas's noble crest. The fair Hypolita likewise had her proportion, and was exceedingly well rigged. In this manner Xaral spent the ducats which had been intrusted to him, without thinking that they did not belong to him, and that he could never repay them. He did not make the least hesitation to act in this manner ; he even thought it equitable that a plebeian should pay for the honour of having dealings with a gentleman.

'Fabricio had foreseen that ; but he flattered himself that, on the strength of his coin, Don Thomas would be on an intimate footing with him ; that Hypolita would accustom herself by degrees to permit his assiduities, and would at last pardon his presumption in having aspired to her. He certainly had an easier access to them ; they paid him greater attention than they had hitherto done. A rich man is always caressed by the great when he makes himself their milch cow. Xaral and his sister, who hitherto had only known riches by the name, had no sooner felt their utility than they concluded that Fabricio deserved to be managed ; they paid him respects and attentions which enchanted him ; he thought his person was not disagreeable to them, and that they certainly had reflected, that every day gentlemen, to support their nobility, were obliged to have recourse to plebeian connections. In this opinion, which flattered his love, he resolved to ask Hypolita in marriage.

'The very first convenient opportunity he could find of speaking to Don Thomas, he told him that he ardently wished to be his brother-in-law, and that in order to have that honour he would not only relinquish the deposit, but would further make him a present of a thousand pistoles. The haughty Xaral coloured at this proposition, which awakened his pride ; he had nearly discovered all the contempt he had for the son of the husbandman. Yet, however irritated he was with Fabricio's temerity, he composed himself ; and without showing any disdain, he answered, that he could not immediately determine on such an affair ; that it was proper to consult Hypolita respecting it, and even to call a meeting of relations.

‘He dismissed the lover with this answer, and actually convened a diet, composed of some *Hidalgos* of his vicinity, that were related to him, and who all had, like him, the mania of *Hidalguia*. He held a council with them, not to ask if they were of opinion that he should grant his sister to Fabricio, but to deliberate in what manner they should punish this young presumer, who, notwithstanding the meanness of his birth, durst aspire to the possession of a girl of Hypolita’s quality.

‘As soon as he had laid this presumption before the company, at the bare name of Fabricio, and of the husbandman’s son, you should have seen the eyes of all those nobles sparkle with rage ; each of them belched fire and flames against the audacious wretch. Some, as well as the rest, were for having him expire under the cudgel, to expiate the affront offered to their family by the proposition of so debasing a marriage. However, after they had considered the business more maturely, the determination of the diet was to let the culprit live ; but in order to teach him not to forget himself again, they would play him a trick which he would have reason to remember a long while.

‘They proposed several plots, and this one was adopted : they agreed that Hypolita should seem pleased with Fabricio’s attachment, and that, under pretence of wishing to compensate that unfortunate lover for the refusal Don Thomas would make to accept of him for a brother-in-law, she should invite him to the castle, where whilst he was getting admittance by the Moorish woman, some persons, provided for the purpose, should surprise him with that waiting-woman, whom they would compel him to marry.

‘Xaral’s sister at first gave in to this fraud without repugnance ; it appeared to her that her glory required she should consider as an affront the suit of a man of a situation so much beneath hers. But this haughty disposition soon gave way to emotions of pity, or rather love on a sudden conquered Hypolita’s arrogance.

‘From that moment she saw matters in a different light : she found Fabricio’s obscure origin compensated by the good qualities he possessed, and only beheld in him a gentleman worthy of all her affections. Admire, Signior scholar, admire the wonderful change that passion is capable of effecting ; this same girl, who imagined that a prince was scarcely worthy of

possessing her, in a moment fancies the son of a husbandman, and is pleased with his pretensions, after having considered them as a disgrace. She gave way to the partiality that actuated her; and far from assisting her brother's resentment, she kept a secret correspondence with Fabricio, with the assistance of the Moorish woman. But Don Thomas had some suspicion of what was going forward; he began to suspect his sister; he watched her, and was convinced that, instead of giving in to the views of the family, she was betraying them. He presently informed two of his cousins of it, who, taking fire at the news, began to cry out, "Revenge! Don Thomas, Revenge!" Xaral, who did not require to be urged on, to take satisfaction for an offence of that nature, said to them with Spanish modesty, "that they should see what use he could make of his sword when it was requisite to employ it in revenging his honour;" he then requested them to come to his house on a day he appointed.

'They were very punctual to the appointment. He admitted them and concealed them in a little room, without anybody in the house perceiving it; he then left them, telling them that he would come to them as soon as the gallant got into the castle, provided he thought proper to come; in which he did not fail, the malignant star of our lovers having decreed they should choose the same day to converse with each other.

'Don Fabricio was with his dear Hypolita. They began a subject they had conversed on a hundred times, but which, although incessantly repeated, had always the charms of novelty, when they were very disagreeably interrupted by the gentlemen who were on the watch for them. Don Thomas and his cousins, all three, came to fall valiantly on Fabricio, who had only time to put himself on his guard, and who, concluding from their behaviour that they wanted to murder him, fought desperately. He wounded all three of them, and, showing them always the point of his sword, he had the good fortune to get to the door and make his escape.

'Xaral then seeing that his enemy had got clear, after having dishonoured his house with impunity, turned his fury against the unfortunate Hypolita, and plunged his sword into her heart; and his two relations, much mortified at the ill success of their contrivance, retired to their homes with their wounds.

'Let us stop here,' continued Asmodeo. 'When we have

seen all the captives pass by I will finish this history. I will relate to you in what manner, after justice had seized on all his property on account of this fatal event, he had the misfortune to be captured on his passage at sea.'

'A good-looking old man attracts my attention,' said Léandro Pérez. 'Who is that man?'

The devil answered, 'It is a barber, native of Guiposcoa, who is going to return to Biscay after forty years' captivity. When he fell in the hands of a Corsair, on his passage from Valencia to the Island of Sardinia, he had a wife, two sons, and a daughter; he has now remaining but one son, who, more fortunate than he, has been to Peru, whence he has returned with immense property, to his own country, where he has purchased two fine estates.'

'What a satisfaction!' returned the scholar. 'What ecstasy for this son to see his father again, and to be in a situation to make his last days agreeable and easy!'

'You speak,' returned the cripple, 'as a child replete with tenderness and sensibility. The Biscayen barber's son is of a more callous disposition: his father's unexpected arrival will occasion him more uneasiness than joy; instead of keeping him in his house at Guiposcoa, and of sparing nothing to show that he is enraptured with possessing him, he will probably make him overseer of one of his estates.'

'Behind the captive, who to you appears so decent, there is another, as like an old ape as one drop is like another. It is a little Arragonian physician; he has not been a fortnight in Algiers. As soon as the Turks knew of what profession he was, they would not keep him among them; they chose rather to deliver him without ransom to the fathers of la Merci, who certainly would not have redeemed him, and who brought him back to Spain very unwillingly.'

'You who are so sympathizing in the afflictions of others, ah! how you would pity that other slave who has a patch of brown cloth on his bald head, did you but know all the sufferings he has endured at Algiers, for twenty-five years, with an English renegado, his master.'

'And who is that poor captive?' said Léandro.

'It is a Franciscan friar of Navarre,' answered the demon. 'I confess to you that I am very glad he has suffered like a

wretch, as by his moral discourses he has prevented above a hundred Christian slaves from taking the turban.'

'I will tell you with the same candour,' returned Don Cléofas, 'that I am sorry that good father has so long been at the mercy of a barbarian.'

'You are in the wrong to lament it, and I to rejoice at it,' answered Asmodeo; 'this good friar has put his twelve years of adversity to such good account, that it is more profitable for him to have spent that time in suffering, than in his cell, striving against temptations which he could not always overcome.'

'The first captive after that Franciscan,' said Léandro Pérez, 'has a very quiet air for a man returning from slavery; my curiosity is excited to ask you who that personage is.'

'You have the start of me,' answered the cripple; 'I was going to point him out to you.' You see in him a citizen of Salamanca, an unfortunate father, a mortal that is become callous to misfortunes by dint of undergoing them. I am tempted to relate to you his affecting history, and take no notice of the remaining captives, especially as after him there are very few whose adventures are worth reciting to you.'

The scholar, who already began to be weary of seeing so many sorrowful figures pass by, expressed that he would like nothing better. The devil then related to him what is contained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE LAST HISTORY ASMODEO RELATED: HOW IN RELATING IT, HE WAS SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED; AND IN WHAT MANNER, SO DISAGREEABLE TO THAT DEMON, DON CLÉOFAS AND HE WERE SEPARATED.

'PABLOS DE BAHABON, son of a country alcade, of Old Castille, after having divided with a brother and sister the moderate patrimony which their father had left them, set out for Salamanca with the intention of increasing the number of students

of the university. He was handsome ; he had some understanding ; and he was then entering his twenty-third year.

‘ With a thousand ducats he possessed, and a disposition inclined to squander them, he was not long before he made himself talked of in the city. All the young folks sought his friendship with emulation : it was who should be of the parties of pleasure Don Pablos had every day. I say Don Pablos because he had assumed the Don that he might have a right to live more familiarly with those students whose rank might have compelled him to keep to himself. He was so fond of mirth and good living, and he husbanded his purse so little, that at the end of fifteen months his money failed him. He still sometimes cut a dash, as well on the strength of the credit he had, as by some pistoles he borrowed ; but that could not carry him far, and he presently remained without resource.

‘ His friends then, seeing him no longer in a situation to stand caterer, ceased to visit him, and his creditors began to be troublesome. Although he assured the latter that he was shortly to receive some bills of exchange from his country, some of them grew impatient, and prosecuted him so sharply that they were on the point of making him a prisoner, when, walking on the banks of the river of Tormes, he met a person of his acquaintance, who said to him, “ Signior Don Pablos, take care of yourself. I give you warning that there are an alguazil and some archers at your heels ; they intend tapping you on the shoulder when you return into the city.”

‘ Bahabon, terrified at the caution that accorded but too well with the situation of his affairs, immediately took flight on the road to Corita ; but he left the path to that town in order to get to a wood he perceived in the country, and into which he penetrated, resolved to remain concealed there until night came to lend him its obscurity to continue his march more securely. It was in the season when the trees are in full leaf ; he chose one of the thickest to climb up into, and there sat on some branches which surrounded him with their foliage.

‘ Thinking himself in safety in this place, he, by degrees, lost all fear of the alguazil ; and as men generally make the finest reflections in the world when faults are committed, he represented to himself all his ill-conduct, and made a firm promise to himself, if ever he should be in cash, to make a better use of

his money. He swore, above all, that he would never be the dupe of those false friends who lead a man into excesses, and whose friendship dissipates with the fumes of the wine. Whilst he was engaged with the different ideas that succeeded each other in his imagination, it became night. Then clearing himself from the boughs and leaves which covered him, he was going to drop down, when, by the dim light of a new moon, he thought he perceived the figure of a man. At this sight, which recalled his former apprehension, he supposed it to be the alguazil, who, having tracked him, was looking for him in this wood; and his terror increased when he saw that man sit down at the foot of the tree on which he was, after having gone round it twice or thrice.'

The crippled devil interrupted himself at this period of his narrative. 'Signior Zambullo,' said he to Don Cléofas, 'permit me to enjoy a little the embarrassment in which I put your mind at this moment. You are very anxious to know who that mortal could be that came there so unseasonably, and what brought him there. That you shall soon be acquainted with. I will not abuse your patience.

'This man, after having sat down at the foot of the tree, the thick foliage of which concealed Don Pablos from his sight, rested there some moments. He then began to dig the ground with a dagger, and made a deep hole, in which he buried a leather bag. He then filled up the hole, replaced the sod properly, and withdrew. Bahabon, who had observed the whole with extreme attention, and whose apprehensions were changed to transports of joy, waited till the man was gone to go down from his tree and dig up the bag, in which he did not doubt there was gold or silver. He made use of his knife for that purpose; but even if he had not had one, he felt so much eagerness for this work that with his hands alone he would have penetrated to the bowels of the earth.

'As soon as he had the bag in his power he began to feel it, and convinced that there was coin in it, he made haste to get out of the wood with his booty, fearing less to meet the alguazil than the man to whom the bag belonged. In the rapture this student was in at having made so fine a haul, he walked briskly all night, without keeping any certain path, without being weary, or incommoded with the burden he carried. But at daybreak

he stopped under the trees pretty near the town of Molorido, less, in fact, to rest himself than to satisfy at length the curiosity he had to know the contents of the bag. He therefore untied it with that agreeable tremor which seizes you the moment you are going to experience a great pleasure. He there found some good double pistoles, and, to complete his joy, he counted two hundred and fifty of them.

‘After having eyed them with delight, he reflected very seriously what was to be done; and when he had made his determination, he crammed the doubloons into his pocket, and repaired to Molorido. He then inquired for an inn, where, while they were getting breakfast for him, he hired a mule, on which he returned to Salamanca that very day.

‘He easily perceived, from the surprise they expressed at seeing him again, that they were not ignorant wherefore he had disappeared; but he had his tale ready. He said, that being in want of money, and receiving none from his country, although he had written twenty times to send him some, he had determined to take a trip there; and that the evening before, on arriving at Molorido, he had met his farmer, who was bringing him some cash; so that he found himself in a situation to undeceive all those who thought him a man of no property. He added that he intended to let his creditors know that they had been in the wrong to bear hard upon an honest man who would have satisfied them long ago if he had had tenants more punctual in remitting him his rents.

‘He did not fail actually to call all his creditors together at his house, and to pay them to the last penny. The same friends that had deserted him in his necessities, no sooner knew that he had a fresh supply of money than they returned to the charge. They began to flatter him, hoping to make merry again at his expense; but he laughed at them in his turn. True to the oath he had taken in the wood, he affronted them. Instead of resuming his former course, he thought only of making progress in the science of law, and study became his sole occupation.

‘However, you will tell me, he still spent prudently the double pistoles that were not his own. I grant that: he did what three-fourths and a half of mankind would do now-a-days in a like situation. He, however, intended restoring them some day or other, if by chance he should discover to whom they be-

longed. But, relying on his good intention, he spent them without scruple, waiting patiently for this discovery, which, however, he made a year after.

'A report circulated in Salamanca that a citizen of that place, named Ambrosio Piquillo, having been into a wood to look for a bag, full of gold pieces, which he had buried there, had only found the hole in which he had thought proper to hide it; and that this misfortune, in short, reduced the poor man to beggary.

'I will say, in praise of Bahabon, that the secret reproaches his conscience made him at this news were not useless. He found out Ambrosio's abode, and went to see him, in a little room, in which a truckle bed and a chair were all the furniture.

"My friend," said he to him, with a hypocritical air, "I have learned from public report the terrible accident that has happened you; and as charity obliges us to assist one another according to our ability, I come to bring you a small assistance. But I should like to learn your unfortunate adventure from yourself."

"Signior cavalier," answered Piquillo, "I am going to relate it to you in two words. I had a son who robbed me. I perceived it; and fearing lest he should lay hands on a leather bag, in which there were two hundred and fifty doubloons, well counted, I thought I could not do better than to go and hide them in the wood, into which I had the imprudence to carry them. Since that unfortunate day my son has taken from me all that I had, and disappeared with a woman he has carried off. Finding myself in a deplorable situation, through the extravagance of this wicked child, or rather through my foolish kindness for him, I wished to have recourse to my leather bag; but, alas, the only resource I had left to subsist on has been cruelly taken from me."

'This man could not finish these words without feeling the renewal of his affliction, and he shed tears in abundance. Don Pablos was affected thereat, and said to him, "My dear Ambrosio, we ought to console ourselves for all the crosses that befall us in life. Your tears are superfluous; they will not make you find your double pistoles again, which are certainly lost to you if any knave be in possession of them. But who knows? they may perhaps have fallen into the hands of an honest man, who will not fail to restore them to you as soon as

he knows they belong to you. They may, therefore, be repaid to you. Live in that hope, and in expectation of so equitable a restitution," added he, giving him ten of the very doubloons that had been in the leather bag, "take this, and come and see me in eight days."

'After speaking in this manner, he told him his name and abode, and went out quite abashed at the thanks Ambrosio gave him, and the blessings he received from him.

'Such are, for the most part, generous actions. We should forbear to admire them did we but know their motives.

'At the end of eight days Piquillo, who had not forgot what Don Pablos had told him, went to his house. Bahabon received him very cordially, and said affectionately to him, "My friend, from the good character I have heard of you, I have determined to contribute as much as I am able to set you again on foot. I will make use of my purse and my interest for that purpose. To begin to retrieve your affairs," continued he, "do you know what I have already done? I am acquainted with some persons of distinction who are very charitable. I called on them, and I have so completely inspired them with compassion for you, that I got from them two hundred crowns, which I am going to give you."

'At the same time he went into his closet, whence he came a moment after with a linen bag, into which he put that sum in silver, and not in doubloons, for fear that the citizen, receiving so many double pistoles from him, might take it into his head to suspect the truth; whereas, by that precaution he the better attained his end, which was to make the restitution in a manner that might conciliate his reputation with his conscience.

'Indeed, Ambrosio was very far from supposing that those crowns were money restored; he believed them to be the proceeds of a collection made for him; and after having again thanked Don Pablos, he returned to his little room, blessing heaven for having found a gentleman that so warmly interested himself in his behalf.

'The next day he met one of his friends in the street, whose affairs were not much better than his, and who said to him, "I am going in two days to embark at Cadiz, whence a vessel is shortly to sail for New Spain. I am not satisfied with my situation in this country, and my heart tells me I shall be more

fortunate at Mexico. I would advise you to accompany me if you had only in your possession one hundred crowns."

"I should not be troubled to have two hundred," answered Piquillo. "I would willingly undertake that voyage were I sure of gaining a livelihood in the Indies."

'Thereupon his friend extolled to him the fertility of New Spain, and pointed out to him so many methods of growing rich there, that Ambrosio, letting himself be persuaded, thought of nothing but of setting off for Cadiz with him. But before leaving Salamanca he took care to send a letter to Bahabon, by which he informed him, that finding a good opportunity of getting to the Indies, he intended embarking for it to try if fortune would be more favourable to him abroad than in his own country; that he took the liberty of giving him this information, assuring him that he should ever retain the remembrance of his kindness.

'Ambrosio's departure occasioned some uneasiness to Don Pablos, who saw his intention of exonerating himself by degrees was thereby frustrated; but reflecting that in a few years that citizen might return to Salamanca, he insensibly consoled himself for it, and applied himself more than ever to the study of civil and ecclesiastical law. He made so great progress therein, as well through his application as through the vivacity of his genius, that he became the brightest member of the university, which at length chose him for its rector. He was not satisfied with maintaining that dignity by profound erudition; he laboured so hard on himself, that he acquired all the virtues of a good man.

'During his rectorate he learned that in the prisons of Salamanca there was a young man likely to lose his life. Recollecting, then, Piquillo's son, he made inquiry who the prisoner was; and having discovered that it was actually Ambrosio's son, he undertook his defence. What is admirable in the science of the law is, that it furnishes weapons for and against; and as our rector was thoroughly master of it, he exerted it with success for the accused. True, indeed, he joined to it the interest of his friends, and the strongest solicitations, which effected more than the rest.

'The culprit, therefore, was acquitted whiter than snow. He went to thank his deliverer, who said to him, "It is on your

father's account that I have assisted you. I love him, and to give you another proof of it, if you will stay in this city and lead the life of an honest man, I will take care of your fortune; but if, like Ambrosio, you wish to take a voyage to the Indies, you may depend on fifty pistoles; I will be good for them."

'Young Piquillo answered, "As I have the honour of being patronized by your Worship, I should be in the wrong were I to leave a situation in which I enjoy so great an advantage. I will not leave Salamanca, and I promise you to pursue a conduct with which you will be satisfied."

'On this assurance the rector put into his hand a score of pistoles, saying to him, "Here, my friend, apply yourself to some decent profession; make good use of your time, and be assured I will not desert you."

'Two months after this adventure it happened that young Piquillo, who, from time to time, came to pay his respects to Don Pablos, one day appeared before him in tears.

"What is the matter?" said Bahabon to him.

"Signior," answered Ambrosio's son, "I have just heard a piece of news that rends my heart. My father has been captured by an Algerine Corsair, and is now in captivity. An old man of Salamanca, returned from Algiers, where he has been a captive for ten years, and whom the friars de la Merci have lately redeemed, just now told me he had left him in slavery. Alas!" added he, beating his bosom and tearing his hair, "wretch that I am! It is I whose extravagance has obliged my father to hide his money, and exile himself from his country; it is I that have delivered him to the barbarians that are loading him with chains. Ah! Signior Don Pablos, why did you extricate me from the hands of justice? As you love my father, you ought to be his avenger, and suffer me to expiate, by my death, the crime of having occasioned all his misfortunes."

'At this speech, which indicated a reprobate son reclaimed, the rector was affected with the grief young Piquillo displayed. "Child," said he to him, "I see with pleasure that you are sorry for your past errors; dry up your tears; it is enough I know what has happened to Ambrosio to assure you that you shall see him again. His deliverance only depends on a ransom, of which I take charge. Whatever sufferings he may have undergone, I am convinced that at his return, finding in

you a prudent son and full of tenderness for him, he will no longer lament his hard fortune."

'Don Pablos dismissed the son of Ambrosio quite comforted with this promise; and three or four days after he set out for Madrid, where, being arrived, he gave to the Friars de la Merci a purse, in which there was a hundred pistoles, with a little memorandum, on which these words were written, *This sum is given to the Fathers of Redemption for the ransom of a poor citizen of Salamanca, named Ambrosio Piquillo, captive at Algiers.*

'Those good friars, on this voyage they have made to Algiers, have not failed to follow the wishes of the rector; they have redeemed Ambrosio, who is that slave whose tranquil behaviour you so much wondered at.'

'But I think,' said Don Cléofas, 'that Bahabon is not much in arrears with that citizen.'

'Don Pablos thinks otherwise than you,' answered Asmodeo. 'He will restore the principal and the interest; the delicacy of his conscience goes so far as to hesitate to enjoy the property he has acquired since he has been rector; and when he sees Piquillo again, he intends saying to him, "Ambrosio, my friend, no longer consider me as your benefactor; you only see in me the knave who dug up the money you had concealed in the wood. It is not enough that I return you your two hundred and fifty doubloons, as I have made use of them to attain to the rank I hold in this world; all my effects belong to you; I will only keep what you please; that"'

The crippled devil stopped short at this place; he was taken with a trembling, and his countenance changed.

'What is the matter with you?' said the scholar. 'What extraordinary emotion agitates you, and all at once interrupts you?'

'Ah! Signior Léandro,' cried the demon with a faltering voice, 'what a misfortune for me! the magician who kept me confined in a bottle has just found out that I am no longer in his laboratory; he is going to summon me by such potent incantations, that I cannot resist them.'

'How I am mortified with it,' said Don Cléofas, quite affected! 'what a loss I am going to incur! we are going to part forever!'

'I do not think so,' returned Asmodeo; 'the magician may have occasion for my offices; and if I have the good luck to render him some service, perhaps, through gratitude, he may set me at liberty: should that happen, as I hope it will, depend upon my returning to you immediately, provided you disclose to no one what has passed between us this night; for if you have the indiscretion to communicate it to any one, I forewarn you that you will not see me again.

'What consoles me a little for being obliged to leave you,' continued he, 'is, that I have made your fortune at least; you shall marry the fair Seraphina, whom I have rendered enamoured with you: Signior Don Pedro de Escolano, her father, is in the determination to give her to you in marriage: do not forego so fine an establishment.

'But, mercy!' added he, 'I already hear the magician conjuring: all hell is dismayed at the terrible words pronounced by this formidable cabalist. I cannot remain any longer with your honour. Farewell, dear Zambullo, till I see you again.' Saying these words he embraced Don Cléofas and disappeared, after having transported him into his apartment.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT DON CLÉOFAS DID AFTER THE CRIPPLED DEVIL HAD LEFT HIM, AND IN WHAT MANNER THE AUTHOR OF THIS WORK HATH THOUGHT EXPEDIENT TO END IT.

A MOMENT after Asmodeo's retreat, the scholar, feeling himself fatigued with having been on his legs all night, and with having been much in motion, undressed himself and went to bed, in order to take some rest. In the agitation in which his spirits were, he had much difficulty to get asleep; but at length, paying with usury to Morpheus the tribute due to him from all mortals, he fell into a lethargic slumber, in which he passed the day and the following night.

He had already been twenty-four hours in that situation,

when Don Louis de Lujan, a young gentleman, a friend of his, came into his chamber, crying with all his might, 'Hallo, Signior Don Cléofas, up! up!' At this noise Zambullo awoke. 'Do you know,' said Don Louis to him, 'that you have been in bed since yesterday morning?'

'That is impossible,' answered Léandro.

'Nothing is more true,' returned his friend. 'You have slept twice round the dial; every one in this house has assured me so.'

The scholar, surprised at so long a nap, was at first apprehensive that his adventure with the crippled devil was an illusion; but he could not believe it; and when he recollected certain circumstances he no longer doubted the reality of what he had seen. However, in order to be more certain of it, he got up, dressed himself in haste, and went out with Don Louis, whom he led towards the Sun-gate, without telling him why. When they were there, and Don Cléofas saw Don Pedro's house almost reduced to ashes, he pretended to be surprised at it. 'What do I see?' said he. 'What devastation the fire has made here! To whom did that unlucky house belong? Has it been long burned?'

'Don Louis de Lujan answered his two questions, and then added, 'This fire makes less noise in the city by the considerable damage it has done, than by a circumstance of which I am going to inform you. Signior Don Pedro de Escolana has an only daughter, beautiful as the day. It is said that she was in a chamber full of flames and smoke, where she must of course have perished, and that, however, she was saved by a young gentleman, whose name I do not yet know: that is the subject of all conversation in Madrid. They extol the valour of that gentleman to the skies; and it is thought, that as a reward for so bold an action, although he be only a private gentleman, he may obtain Signior Don Pedro's daughter.'

Léandro Pérez heard Don Louis without seeming to take the least concern in what he said: then getting rid of him under a specious pretence, he went to the Prado, where, having seated himself under some trees, he fell into a deep reverie. The crippled devil immediately engrossed his ideas. 'I cannot,' said he, 'too much regret my dear Asmodeo; he would have taken me round the world in a very little time, and I might

have travelled without experiencing the inconveniences of a journey. I have, without doubt, met with a great loss : but,' added he a moment after, 'it perhaps is not irreparable. Why despair of seeing this demon again? It may happen, as he himself told me, that the magician may set him at liberty immediately.' Afterwards, thinking of Don Pedro and his daughter, he took the resolution of going to see them, actuated only by curiosity to see the fair Seraphina.

As soon as he appeared before Don Pedro, that nobleman ran to him with open arms, saying, 'Welcome, generous sir. I began to complain of you. What then, said I, Don Cléofas, after the request I made him to come and see me, has not yet made his appearance. How backward he is in gratifying my impatience to show him the esteem and friendship I feel for him.'

Zambullo respectfully bowed his head to this obliging reproach, and said to the old man, as an excuse, that he was afraid of incommoding him in the disorder he supposed him to be the day before.

'I am not satisfied with that excuse,' answered Don Pedro. 'You cannot be troublesome in a house in which, without your assistance, we should be in the greatest sorrow. But,' continued he, 'follow me if you please; you have other thanks than mine to receive.' Thus saying, he took him by the hand and led him to Seraphina's apartment.

That lady had just taken a nap. 'Daughter,' said her father, 'I come to present to you the gentleman who so bravely saved your life; express to him how much you are impressed with what he has done for you.'

Signiora Seraphina, then opening a mouth of roses, addressed herself to Leandro Pérez, and paid him a compliment which would charm all my readers, could I repeat it verbatim; but as it was not faithfully related to me, I had rather pass it in silence than mutilate it.

I will only say, that Don Cléofas thought he saw and heard a deity; that he was captivated at the same time by his eyes and ears; he immediately entertained a violent love for her; but, far from considering her as a person he could not miss marrying, he doubted, notwithstanding what the demon had told him, that they would make so precious a return for the

service it was thought he had rendered. The more charming he thought her, the less he durst flatter himself with obtaining her

What occurred to make him quite uncertain of so great an advantage was, that Don Pedro, in the long conversation they had together, did not touch that string, and only loaded him with civilities, without intimating that he had the least desire to be his father-in-law. Seraphina, on her side, as polite as her papa, made speeches replete with gratitude, without making use of any expression that could give Zambullo room to suppose that she was in love with him ; so that he left Signior de Escalano's house with a great deal of love and very little hope.

'Asmodeo, my friend,' said he, going home, as if he had yet been with that devil, 'when you assured me that Don Pedro was disposed to make me his son-in-law, and that Seraphina burned with a violent ardour for me, with which you had inspired her, you must have wanted to amuse yourself at my cost ; if not, you cannot be better acquainted with the present than with futurity.' Our scholar was sorry that he had been to that lady's ; and, considering the love he had for her as an unfortunate passion, which he ought to overcome, he resolved to spare nothing for that purpose : he did more ; he upbraided himself for the desire he had formed of carrying his point, allowing that he had found the father disposed to grant him his daughter ; and he represented to himself that it was base to owe his happiness to fraud.

He was yet full of these reflections, when Don Pedro, having sent for him the next day, said to him, 'Signior Léandro Pérez, it is time I should prove by actions, that by obliging me you have not done a favour to one of those courtiers who would be satisfied, in my situation, with giving you fair and empty words : I intend that Seraphina herself shall be the reward of the danger you incurred for her : I have consulted her respecting it, and I find her ready to obey me without reluctance : I will even tell you that I knew my own blood, when I proposed her deliverer for her husband ; she testified her joy thereat, by a transport which indicated that her generosity was equal to mine. It is a thing determined—you shall marry my daughter.'

After having thus said, the worthy Signior de Escalano,

who expected, with reason, that Don Cléofas would return him very humble thanks for so great a favour, was much astonished at finding him speechless and confused.

'Speak, Zambullo,' said he to him. 'What must I think of the perplexity into which the proposal I make throws you? What can set you against it? Ought a private gentleman to reject an alliance by which a nobleman would think himself honoured? Has the nobility of my house any stain of which I am ignorant.'

'Signior,' answered Léandro, 'I know but too well the distance heaven has placed between us.'

'Why, then,' returned Don Pedro, 'do you seem so much averse to a marriage that does you so much honour? Confess, Don Cléofas, you love some lady who has received your faith, and her interest, at this moment, is opposed to your good fortune.'

'Had I a mistress to whom I were engaged by oaths,' answered the scholar, 'nothing certainly would be capable of making me betray them. But that reason does not prevent me from taking advantage of your kindness; an emotion of delicacy compels me to relinquish the glorious establishment you propose to me; and, far from wishing to take advantage of your proposal, I am going to undeceive you; I am not Seraphina's deliverer.'

'What do I hear?' cried the old man, quite astonished. 'It was not you who delivered her from the flames that were going to consume her? It is not you who have done so brave an action?'

'No, Signior,' answered Zambullo; 'any mortal would have undertaken it in vain; and I must inform you that it is a devil that saved your daughter.'

These words increased Don Pedro's astonishment, who, not thinking that he ought to understand them literally, begged the scholar to speak more clearly. Then Léandro, without caring about losing Asmodeo's friendship, related all that had passed between that demon and him; after which the old man resumed the discourse, and said to Don Cléofas, 'What you have just disclosed to me confirms me in my intention to give you my daughter; you are her first deliverer. Had you not entreated the crippled devil to snatch her from the death which

threatened her, he would certainly have suffered her to perish. It is you, therefore, who have preserved Seraphina's life ; in a word, you are worthy of her, and I offer her to you with the half of my property.' Léandro Pérez at these words, which removed all his doubts, threw himself at Don Pedro's feet, to thank him for his kindness.

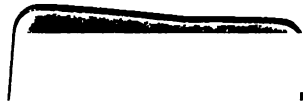
A short time after, this marriage was celebrated with a magnificence suitable to the heir of Signior de Escolana, and to the great satisfaction of our scholar's relations, who remained amply rewarded thereby for some hours of liberty he had procured to the Crippled Devil.

THE END.





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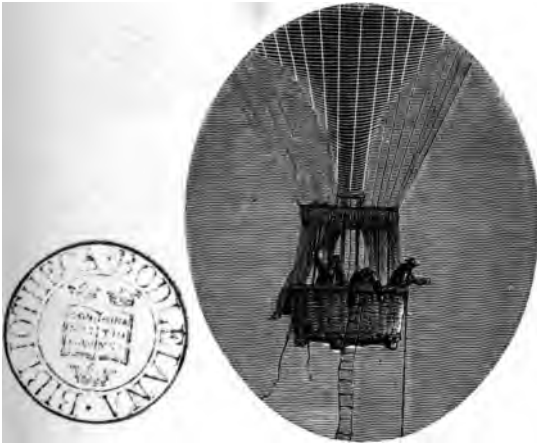


FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON.

FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON.

A VOYAGE OF
EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

FROM THE FRENCH OF JULES VERNE.



WITH SIXTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY RIOU.

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FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON.

CHAPTER I.

Dr. Samuel Fergusson ; his projected Journey ; how to accomplish it.

—Dick Kennedy ; his attempts at Dissuasion ; their Failure.



HERE have been disputes as to the originator of the great idea of traversing the African continent, in a manner to be independent of its multitudinous and deadly obstructions ; but the subjoined narrative will, we cannot doubt, be sufficient to assure the reader that the man who undertook, and in the face of unexampled difficulties carried out, the project, conceived it, and stands indebted to no one for the honours now accumulating on the name of Dr. Samuel Fergusson.

Among men of science, the claims of any other than Fergusson to this invention of a method of, as it were, laying bare the bosom of a mighty continent at one blow, would be received with ridicule. In him, as in many of the most adventurous minds in Europe, it had become an established belief that the secret recesses of Africa were to be attained by persistent energy. But he saw at the same time

that the most resolute efforts, with heroism to back them, accomplished, to his mind, insufficient results. The scheme of the previous expeditions could barely grapple with the enormous natural obstacles in the paths of the intrepid wanderers. Everything that men and heroes could do had been done, and yet the tracks of civilised steps were but threads running through those vast and barbarous deserts. Speculating on the three separate ways which had been opened by his illustrious predecessors—that of Barth, who, following the route traced by Denham and Clapperton, penetrated to the Soudan; of Livingstone, who has pushed from the Cape of Good Hope to the basin of the Zambesi, and other parts as yet unknown; and of Burton and Speke, to whom is due the discovery of the immense interior lakes—he felt that Africa was still a mystery. Man's physical strength, devotion, and courage seemed not enough for the giant task. With the irradiation of the light of Genius, he called on Science to aid him.

Hitherto it had been incumbent on all explorers to bribe, menace, and cajole, sometimes, at the imminent risk of their lives, to use arms against the savage inhabitants. Dr. Fergusson's design was to evade them. It had aforesaid been a work of years to cross a patch and skirt of this continent. He meant to survey Africa in the course of a few leisure weeks. What was once a heavy,

weariful foot march, dependent for progress on the fidelity of native servants, he determined to perform lightly and airily, with a moderate supply of comforts, supported entirely by his scientific knowledge, based on deep and serious calculations, and his firmness of nerve, which he knew well that he could trust.

The dream of such a voyage has doubtless passed through other heads, and it has remained a dream; that is to say, it has passed *through* them, and left no mark upon the history of European enterprise. No sooner was the balloon invented than people began to talk of visiting the distant quarters of the globe as one of the ordinary expeditions of daily life. It was reserved for Dr. Samuel Fergusson to show what can actually be done with this hitherto intractable means of transit.

In short, he conceived the simple idea of taking a survey of the African continent in a balloon.

Dr. Fergusson was not an idealist, he was not a dreamer, and he was not mad, though his friends—especially the one whom he invited to accompany him—were at first inclined to make him a subject for the Commissioners of Lunacy when he expounded his design to them: he was a practical man. This will be seen and attested by the reader, as it has already been by the scientific world.

To the Doctor it was a voyage of pleasure,

sharpened by the keen exercise of his intelligence, and the development of laborious premeditations. So little did he doubt its being likewise a voyage of comparative safety, that he invited—partly, it may be confessed, compelled—his intimate and dearest friend to join him in the adventure of five weeks, as though it were a tour in Switzerland.

The friend in question was Richard Kennedy, his old comrade in arms, Dick, formerly of the famous Cameronians, and as noticeable a specimen of the Black Watch in its pride as you would wish to see.

The Doctor himself was a man of middle size, of a composed aspect, with regular features, a forcible nose strongly suggestive of determination and pursuit of his game, and peculiarly soft eyes, more meditative than daring. His bearing was on most occasions grave, while a strong bloom of animal health suffused his cheeks. Remarkably long arms, and a firm grip of the earth in walking, characterised the accomplished pedestrian, used to rely on his own exertions.

His friend Dick was a Scotchman in every sense of the word, open and candid, resolute, and a trifle obstinate. He was a great fisherman, and a mighty hunter, nothing very surprising in a native of the Highlands of Scotland; and so wonderful a shot was he reputed, that it was said that not only could he hit with his rifle-ball the blade of a knife, but could hit it so accurately,

that the bullet, when afterwards weighed, would be found in equal halves.

Kennedy's appearance recalled that of Halbert Glendining, as described by Sir Walter Scott in "The Monastery;" in height he exceeded six feet, and his figure, though full of ease and grace, was also gifted with Herculean strength; his face was sunburnt to a deep reddish-brown, and from it looked out two bright black eyes, which indicated the strong natural courage which he possessed; in short, there was something so frank and pleasing in the whole aspect of the Scotchman, that everyone felt at once impressed in his favour.

Our two friends had become acquainted in India, at a time when both belonged to the same regiment; and when Dick was hunting tigers and elephants, Samuel was collecting plants and insects. Each was clever in his own way, and more than one rare plant became the property of the Doctor, who used to say to Dick that he valued it more than his acquisition of ivory tusks.

Although these two young men had no opportunity of saving each other's life, or, indeed, of rendering each other any remarkable service, yet they became close and attached friends. It was their fate to be often separated, but a warm sympathy invariably brought them again together.

Since their return to England, the distant expeditions of the Doctor had often placed seas and continents between them; but on his return from

his wanderings, he had never failed to go, not to ask for, but to give some weeks of his company to his Scotch friend.

Dick talked of the past; Samuel prepared for the future; the one looked forward, the other backwards; thus Fergusson was restless, and always desiring to be moving, whilst Kennedy took everything with the most perfect quietness and placidity.

After his return from a long absence in Thibet, the Doctor remained quiet for nearly two years, without saying a word about new explorations, and Dick had come to believe that his instincts of travel and appetite for adventures had ceased. This greatly pleased Kennedy.

"This sort of thing," thought he, "must have ended badly one day or other. However much used a fellow may be to all sorts of strange people, one can't travel with impunity for ever among anthropophagi and wild beasts."

So Kennedy made up his mind that the Doctor had settled down, having done quite sufficient in the cause of science, and much to earn the gratitude of the human race.

On the Doctor's last visit, however, Dick had noticed that his friend had become thoughtful, and gave himself up to secret calculations, passing whole nights working at figures, and even making experiments with singular-looking engines of which no one could make anything. It was clear

that some great thought was fermenting in his brain.

"What on earth can he be ruminating about?" thought Kennedy, as he bade his friend good-bye on leaving Scotland on his return to London.

A day or two after, a London newspaper answered his question. It contained a notice of the Doctor's intention to cross the African continent in a balloon; he had even made his intention the subject of a paper he had read before the Royal Geographical Society, and so pleased was that august body with his proposal, that it had at once voted him a sum of money towards defraying the expenses of the projected voyage.

"This intrepid discoverer, Dr. Samuel Fergusson," read Dick, "proposes to cross Africa, from east to west, in a balloon. If we are properly informed, the point of departure on this surprising voyage will be the island of Zanzibar, on the eastern coast of the continent; as to the place at which he will arrive on the completion of his voyage, that can be known to Providence alone."

"The unlucky wretch!" cried Dick. "The fool! the madman! To cross Africa in a balloon! This only was wanting! This is what has been running in his head for the last two years!"

Wherever there is a note of exclamation you can imagine Dick giving his head a hard blow with his fist, and you will have some idea of the

exercise in which he indulged whilst ejaculating these words.

Seeing how much the news affected him, his old housekeeper tried to insinuate that it might very well be a mystification.

"Nonsense! Don't I know my man? Isn't it himself all over? To travel through the air! He seems to have become jealous of the eagles! No, certainly this must not be permitted. I must go and put a stop to this. If he is left to himself, he'll start some fine day for the moon!"

That night Dick started for London, and next day saw him at the Doctor's house, where he sprang up the steps, and announced his arrival by a volley of blows with the knocker.

Fergusson opened the door himself.

"Dick!" said he, without any great astonishment.

"Dick himself," replied Kennedy.

"Why, my dear Dick, what are you doing in London—and during the hunting season?"

"To put a stop to a piece of nameless folly."

"A folly?" cried the Doctor.

"Is this true which I read in the paper?" said Dick, holding out a copy.

"Perfectly true; in fact, I was about to write to you. I mean to take you with me."

"Take me!" cried Dick, giving a bound worthy of a chamois. "Do you want both of us to be locked up in Colney Hatch?"

“Not at all. I am quite serious, and if you won't go with me I shall go alone.”

The Doctor was deaf to all his friend's arguments, serious or otherwise; his mind was made up. Dick was, however, determined by all possible means to oppose his friend's departure. Meanwhile he kept his own counsel, and contented himself with keeping his eyes on the Doctor. As for Fergusson, he went on quietly looking after his preparations.

CHAPTER II.

The Doctor decides on a Starting-point.—The Balloon; its Capacity.
 —Balloon within Balloon; their Construction.—The Car; its
 Contents.—Joe.

DR. FERGUSSON had not chosen by chance the aerial line he reckoned on following; his point of departure had been seriously studied, and it was not without good reasons that he had decided to make his ascent from the island of Zanzibar.

This island, situated close to the eastern coast of Africa, is in 6° of southern latitude, that is to say, 430 geographical miles below the equator; and we shall see hereafter that the Doctor knew very well what he was about.

He had been for a long time occupied with the details of his expedition. The balloon, above all, this marvellous vehicle which was to transport him through the air, was the object of his constant solicitude.

First of all, in order that the dimensions of the balloon should not be too great or unwieldy, he resolved to inflate it with hydrogen gas, which is fourteen and a half times lighter than air. The

production of this gas is easy, and it has always given the most satisfactory results in all aerostatic experiences.

The Doctor, after the most exact calculations, found that, for the indispensable objects of his voyage and for his apparatus, it would be necessary to carry a weight of 4,000 lbs., and he had therefore to find out what would be the buoyancy capable of lifting this weight, and consequently what would be the capacity required.

A weight of 4,000 lbs. is represented by a displacement of the air of 44,847 cubic feet, which is as much as to say that 44,847 cubic feet of air weigh about 4,000 lbs. In giving the balloon, then, this capacity of 44,847 cubic feet, and in filling it, in place of air, with hydrogen gas, which, fourteen and a half times lighter, only weighs 276 lbs., there results a difference of 3,724 lbs. It is this difference between the weight of the gas contained in the balloon and the weight of the surrounding air, which constitutes the ascending force of the balloon.

If there were introduced into the balloon the 44,847 feet of gas of which we have been speaking, it would be entirely filled ; but this must never be done, for as the balloon ascends into the less dense strata of the atmosphere, the enclosed gas has a tendency to expand, and would very soon burst its envelope. Consequently, balloons are generally filled two-thirds full. But the Doctor, in conse-

quence of a certain project known only to himself, resolved to fill his balloon only half, and, although he would have to carry 44,847 cubic feet of hydrogen, to give his balloon a capacity of very nearly double. He made it of that elongated form which is known to be preferable; the horizontal diameter was fifty feet, and the vertical diameter seventy-five; he obtained thus a spheroid whose capacity in round numbers we may call 90,000 cubic feet.

If Dr. Fergusson had been able to employ two balloons, his chances of success would have been increased, for in case one should get torn or burst in the air, he could, at all events, by throwing out ballast, keep himself up by the other. But the management of two balloons would become very difficult, when he would have to act so as to keep an equal buoyancy with each.

After long reflection, Fergusson, by an ingenious contrivance, united the advantages of two balloons without the inconveniences; he constructed two of different sizes, and enclosed the one in the other. His outside balloon he kept of the size we have given above, and in it was the lesser one, of the same shape, but which was only forty-five feet in horizontal diameter, and sixty-eight feet vertical. The capacity, therefore, of this interior balloon was only 67,000 cubic feet; it could float in the fluid which surrounded it, and a valve was contrived which could, in case of need, be used to make a communication between the two balloons.

This arrangement presented this advantage, that if he wanted to let out the gas in order to descend, he could let it escape first from the large balloon; even if he entirely emptied it, the little one would remain intact. He could then get rid of the exterior envelope as a troublesome weight; and the little balloon left alone would not offer to the wind the resistance which half-inflated balloons do. Besides, in case of accident, if the exterior balloon should be torn, the other would have the advantage of being preserved.

These two balloons were made of twilled Lyons silk, coated with gutta-percha. This resinous gum is absolutely impermeable; it is entirely unaffected by acids or by gas. The silk was doubled over the entire upper half of the balloon, where the strain would be most felt. This envelope could keep in the fluid for an unlimited time. Nine square feet of it weighed half a pound; but as there were about 11,600 square feet of surface in the material of the exterior balloon, its weight was 650 lbs.

The covering of the second balloon, having 9,200 square feet of surface, only weighed 510 lbs. Thus, both together weighed 1,160 lbs.

The net by which the car was to be suspended, was made of the very best manufactured hemp rope. The two valves also were the objects of as minute care as would have been the helm of a ship.

The car, of a circular shape, and in diameter of fifteen feet, was made of wickerwork, strengthened by a light armature of iron, and lined in the lower part with elastic springs intended to weaken the shocks; its weight and that of the net did not exceed 280 lbs.

The Doctor also had constructed four iron chests or boxes, two lines thick. They were all joined together by pipes furnished with stop-cocks; and he joined to them a serpentine tube of about two inches in diameter, which ended in two straight branches of unequal length, but of which the longer was twenty-five feet high, and the shorter only fifteen. These chests of sheet-iron were fitted into the car so as to occupy the least possible space; the serpentine tube, which it was not necessary to adjust till a later period, was packed separately, as well as an extremely powerful electrical battery by Bunsen. This apparatus had been so ingeniously put together that it did not weigh more than 700 lbs., although this included twenty-five gallons of water contained in a special receptacle.

The instruments intended for the voyage consisted of two barometers, two thermometers, two compasses, a sextant, two chronometers, an artificial horizon, and an altazimuth for raising distant or inaccessible objects. The resources of the Observatory at Greenwich were placed at the Doctor's disposal. It was not his intention, how-

ever, to make any physical experiments or observations; he intended only to observe his direction, and to determine the position of the principal rivers, mountains, and towns.

He provided himself also with three well-tested iron anchors, as well as with a light but strong silken ladder fifty feet in length.

He calculated likewise the exact weight of his provisions; they consisted of tea, coffee, biscuits, salt meat, and pemmican, a substance which contains in a small space a great deal of nutriment. Independently of a sufficient supply of brandy, he contrived two water-tanks, holding each twenty-two gallons. As the eatables and drinkables were consumed, so would be lessened, little by little, the weight lifted by the balloon; for it must be borne in mind that the equilibrium of a balloon in the atmosphere is a very delicate affair—the loss of an almost insignificant weight suffices to produce a very appreciable difference.

The Doctor did not forget a tent, which could be made to cover over a part of the car, nor the coverings which composed all the bedding for the voyage, nor rifles, fowling-pieces, and a good supply of powder and balls.

He had had himself weighed, as well as Kennedy—who, however, still insisted that he would never accompany him on so mad an expedition as a balloon journey across a continent—and also his servant Joe, of whom we must say a word or two.

.

Joe had long been Fergusson's servant, and was, indeed, now looked upon more as a friend; his master had the utmost faith in him, and he amply repaid it by a devotedness to the Doctor that had no limits.

Joe was a perfect master of all trades—there was nothing the handy fellow could not do, and do well; so that when the project of the voyage across Africa was broached Joe took it as a matter of course; obstacles no longer existed, for had not the Doctor said he would do it? That was quite sufficient for Joe; and so, though his master never spoke about it, Joe very well knew he would accompany him on his aerial explorations.

Thus the Doctor made his calculations, and the following list shows how he made up the weight of 4,000 lbs. :—

	lbs.
Fergusson.....	135
Kennedy	153
Joe	120
Weight of first balloon	650
„ second balloon	510
Car and net	280
Anchors, instruments, guns, bedding, &c., tent, different utensils	190
Provisions, pemmican, biscuits, tea, coffee, brandy	386
Water	400
Apparatus	700
Weight of hydrogen gas	276
Ballast	200
Total.....	4,000

Such was the way in which the 4,000 lbs. were

made up, with which the Doctor proposed ascending. He took, as you will have seen, only 200 lbs. weight of ballast—"For unforeseen cases or accidents only," said he, for he reckoned that he would never have to use it, thanks to his apparatus.

CHAPTER III.

Preparations completed.—The *Resolute*.—Captain Pennet.—The Cargo.—Kennedy's Outfit.—The Farewell Dinner.—A Philosophical Discussion.—The Doctor's Plan of Aerial Navigation.



ABOUT the 10th of February preparations were nearly ended; both balloons, one within the other, were entirely finished. They had been subjected to a severe trial of air at an extreme pressure, but had come out of the trial with a success which bore witness to the care which had been taken in their construction.

On the 16th of February, the *Resolute*, a screw steamer of eight hundred tons burthen, a capital sea boat, came into the Thames and anchored off Greenwich. She was commanded by Captain Pennet, of the Royal Navy, and had been placed by government at the service of Dr. Fergusson through the interest of several influential members of the Royal Geographical Society. Pennet was particularly interested in this voyage of the Doctor's, as he had long known and valued him as a friend.

The hold of the *Resolute* had been specially arranged for the reception of the balloon; it was carefully transported there on the 18th of February,

and laid at the bottom in a manner so secure as to prevent any accident. The car and its accessories, the anchors, the ropes, the provisions, the water tanks, were all stowed away under Fergusson's own eyes.

Ten tons of sulphuric acid, and ten tons of old iron, were taken on board for the production of the hydrogen gas. That quantity was more than sufficient, but it was best to be prepared for any possible losses. The apparatus intended for the manufacture of the gas, consisting of thirty barrels, was put at the bottom of the hold. These different preparations were all completed by the evening of the 18th of February.

Two comfortable cabins were arranged for the Doctor and his friend Kennedy. The last still swore hard and fast that he would not go on any account; but the Doctor was not a bit surprised to see him come on board with a regular arsenal—two double-barrelled breech-loaders, and an excellent rifle, with which a thorough sportsman and good shot like Kennedy could lodge a ball at two thousand paces in the eye of a chamois; to these he added two six-barrelled Colt's revolvers, his powder flask and cartridge bag, as well as a supply of shot and bullets, but not exceeding in weight, the Doctor quietly remarked to himself, what he had all along expected his friend Dick to provide himself with. Joe also had comfortable quarters assigned to him.

The last arrangements made, and the last farewells spoken at a great dinner given to the Doctor by the Royal Geographical Society, all arrived safely on board ; and on the morning of the 21st February, at five o'clock, the furnaces of the *Resolute* began to roar, her screw to work, and she to steam down the Thames, fairly on her voyage to Zanzibar.

Many were the conversations on board between the officers of the *Resolute* and the Doctor as to the success likely to attend his bold adventure, but he was never at a loss to meet all these discouraging remarks. One conversation, or rather a part of one, which the Doctor had with Captain Pennet we must report, as it contains what may be called the Doctor's secret—the use he was to make of the apparatus of which we gave a faint description in the preceding chapter.

The Doctor had just remarked that at different heights in the atmosphere there were different currents of air travelling different ways, and that in order to go in which direction you wished in a balloon, it was only necessary to find out a current whose direction suited you, and you could travel at your ease.

"Very true," said Captain Pennet ; "but in order to reach these currents, you must constantly either ascend or descend. There is the true difficulty, my dear Doctor."

"And why, my dear Captain?"

"Let us understand what we are saying : it would only be a difficulty and an obstacle in case of long voyages, not in simple trips in a balloon."

"And your reason, if you please?"

"Because you can only ascend by throwing out your ballast, and you can only descend by losing your gas, and under such an arrangement as that, both your ballast and your gas would very soon be expended."

"My dear Pennet, there is the whole question. There is the only difficulty which science ought to attempt to conquer. It is of no use talking of directing a balloon, the great thing is to be able to bring it down from a height without losing any gas, which is its strength, its blood, its very soul, if I may so express myself."

"Quite right, my dear Doctor ; but that difficulty has not yet been overcome, that means has not yet been found out."

"I beg your pardon, it is found !"

"By whom?"

"By me !"

"By you?"

"Understand thoroughly, that but for that I should never have risked crossing Africa in a balloon. At the end of twenty-four hours I should not have had any gas left !"

"But you never spoke of that in England?"

"No. I did not see the use of having it publicly discussed ; that seemed useless to me. I have made

in secret preparatory experiments, and I have been satisfied ; I have now no longer any need to learn more."

" Ah, well, my dear Fergusson, may one ask your secret ?"

" Certainly, and my method is very simple. Over and over again it has been tried to rise or descend at will without losing the gas or ballast of a balloon. A French aeronaut, M. Meanier, thought he could achieve this by compressing air ; a Belgian, Von Hecke, by means of wings, which would exert a material force, but which would have been insufficient in most cases. The practical results which have been obtained by such means have been altogether insignificant. I resolved then to attack the question differently. First of all, I do away altogether with the ballast, because it is only in very important cases, such as the breaking of any apparatus, or the necessity of ascending instantly to avoid some unforeseen obstacle, that I require it. My means of ascending or of descending consist solely in expanding or contracting, by different temperatures, the gas enclosed in the balloon ; and this is how I obtain such a result :—You saw embarked with the car several cases, of which you do not know the use. Of these cases there are five. The first holds about twenty-five gallons of water, to which I add some drops of sulphuric acid, to increase its conductivity, and I decompose it by means of a powerful battery of Bunsen's. Water, as you know,

is composed of two parts of hydrogen gas and one of oxygen. This last, under the action of the battery, is delivered by the positive pole into a second case. A third, placed above that, and twice the size of it, receives the hydrogen, which comes into it by the negative pole. Stopcocks, of which one has an opening twice the size of the other, allow these two cases to communicate with a fourth, which is called the mixing case. There, in fact, these two gases proceeding from the decomposition of the water, mingle. This mixing case holds about forty-one cubic feet. At the upper part of this case is a platina pipe, furnished with a stopcock. You already comprehend me. The apparatus which I describe to you is really a furnace, whose heat exceeds that of a forge. This settled, I pass to the second part of the apparatus. From the lower part of my balloon—which is hermetically closed—two separate pipes issue at a little distance apart. The one rises from the upper strata of hydrogen gas, the other from the lower. These two pipes are provided at short distances with strong articulations of india-rubber, by which they can lend themselves to the oscillations of the balloon. They both descend to the car, and are let into a case of iron of a cylindrical shape, which is called the heat case. It is closed at both its extremities with strong discs of the same metal. The pipe which comes from the lower part of the balloon is let into this cylindrical box by the bottom

disc; it enters there and takes the shape of a spiral, like the worm of a still, of which the rings, lying one on another, take up nearly the whole height of the case. Before coming out of it, the worm, as we shall call it, leads into a little cone, whose concave base, in the form of a spherical cap, is directed towards the bottom. It is by the summit of this cone that the second pipe issues, and leads, as I have said, into the upper layers of gas in the balloon. The spherical cap of the little cone is made of platina, in order not to melt under the action of the furnace; for that is placed under the bottom of the iron case in the middle of the worm, and the extremity of its flame just lightly licks this cap. You know what a stove is, used to warm rooms. You know how it acts. The air of the room is forced to pass through pipes, and is returned at a more elevated temperature; and what I have just described to you is just such a stove. And in fact what happens? The furnace once lighted, the hydrogen in the worm and the concave cone becomes heated, and rises rapidly by the pipe which leads to the upper regions of the balloon. A void is created below which attracts the gas from the lower regions of the balloon, which, in its turn, is heated and continually replaced; there is thus established in the pipes and the worm an extremely rapid current of gas, coming out of the balloon, returning there, and incessantly increasing in heat. But each degree of heat increases the volume of

gas $\frac{1}{10}$; if then I raise the temperature eighteen degrees, the hydrogen in the balloon will have expanded $\frac{1}{10}$, or sixteen hundred and fourteen cubic feet; it will then displace sixteen hundred and seventy-four cubic feet more of air, which will increase its power of ascension by one hundred and sixty pounds. This obviates throwing out this weight of ballast. If I increase the temperature to a hundred and eighty degrees, the gas will be expanded to $\frac{1}{8}$; it will displace sixteen thousand seven hundred and forty cubic feet more, and its ascending force will have increased by sixteen hundred pounds. You can understand, then, that I can obtain very considerable changes in equilibrium. The capacity of the balloon has been calculated in such a fashion, that being half inflated it displaces a weight of air exactly equal to that of the envelope of the hydrogen gas and of the car carrying the travellers, and all their belongings. In this state of inflation it is in exact equilibrium with the air, and neither mounts aloft nor descends. To ascend I raise the temperature of the gas higher than that of the surrounding air by means of my furnace. By this increase of heat is obtained a greater tension, and the balloon is more inflated and mounts higher the more I expand the hydrogen. The descent is naturally made by moderating the heat of the furnace, and allowing the temperature to cool. The ascent, therefore, will be much more rapid than the descent. But this is a very

fortunate circumstance: I have never any object in descending rapidly; on the contrary, it is by an exceedingly prompt ascent that I avoid all obstacles. The dangers I dread are not to be met with above, but below. Besides, as I told you, I have a certain quantity of ballast, which will allow me to rise still more quickly should that be necessary. My valve, placed at the upper pole of the balloon, is no more than a safety-valve. The balloon always retains the same charge or quantity of hydrogen; the variations which I produce in the temperature of this imprisoned gas alone provide for all the movements of ascending or descending. However, as a bit of practical detail I will add this:—The combustion of the hydrogen and the oxygen in the furnace produces only steam; I have therefore furnished the lower part of the cylindrical iron case with a relief pipe, having a valve which acts at less than two pressures of the atmosphere; consequently, as soon as that pressure is reached the steam escapes of itself. Observe how exact my figures are:—Twenty-five gallons of water decomposed into its constituent elements give two hundred pounds of oxygen and twenty-five pounds of hydrogen. This represents, at the pressure of the atmosphere, eighteen hundred and ninety cubic feet of the first, and three thousand seven hundred and eighty cubic feet of the second; in all, five thousand six hundred and seventy cubic feet of the mixture. But the stopcock of my fur-

nace, fully open, allows twenty-seven cubic feet an hour to pass, with a flame at least six times stronger than that of an ordinary gas-light. It follows, then, that to keep myself at no very great height I should not burn more than nine cubic feet an hour. My twenty-five gallons of water therefore represent six hundred and thirty hours of aerial navigation, or a little more than twenty-six days. But as I can descend when I like, and renew my stock of water on my way, my voyage might be prolonged indefinitely. Such is my secret; it is simple, and like all simple things, it cannot fail to succeed. The expansion and contraction of the gas in the balloon—such is my plan, which neither demands troublesome wings nor mechanical appliances. A furnace to produce any changes of temperature, and a case in which to heat the gas, neither takes up much room nor is heavy. I believe, then, that I have united every necessary condition successfully."

* * * * *

"After all," said the Captain, "it may be dangerous."

"What matters," said the Doctor, quietly, "if it is practicable?"

CHAPTER IV.

Arrival at Zanzibar.—The English Consul.—Ill-will of the Inhabitants.
 —The Island of Koumbeni.—The Rain-makers.—Inflation of the
 Balloon.—The Start on the 18th April.—The last Farewell.—The
 Victoria.

FAVOURABLE winds speeded the *Resolute* to her destination; the Mozambique Channel was safely passed, and at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 15th of April the anchor was let go in the port of Zanzibar.

The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Iman of Muscat, and is certainly the most beautiful of his possessions. Great numbers of ships from all the neighbouring countries visit it. The island is separated from the African coast by a channel, nowhere more than thirty miles wide. A large trade is done in gums, ivory, and above all in ebony, for Zanzibar is the great slave market; here come all the prisoners taken in the battles which the chiefs in the interior constantly wage.

The anchor had not long touched the ground when the English consul came on board to render all the assistance in his power to Dr. Fergusson, and soon, with Kennedy and the faithful Joe, he was comfortably installed in the Consul's house.

Here he heard of the terrible sufferings from hunger and bad weather which Speke had under-



View of Zanzibar.

gone with his companions, in their attempt to reach the country of Ugogo.

"There, Dick," said the Doctor, "think of all those perils and privations which we know how to avoid."

The first intention was to land the balloon on the shore at Zanzibar, and to inflate it near a flag-staff where it would have been sheltered from the east winds by an enormous tower. This tower was like nothing so much as an enormous cask placed on its end, but beside which the famous tun of Heidelberg would have been dwarfed to a little barrel. It answered the purpose of a fort, and on a platform on the top some lazy and quarrelsome Beloutchi sentinels, armed with long lances, kept a sort of watch.

However, at the time of landing the balloon, the Consul received notice that the population of the island intended opposing it by force. Blinded by fanatic passion, they conceived that the Christian who had arrived in order to ascend into the air, was about to do so with intentions hostile to their religion, or to the Sun or Moon, both of which luminaries are objects of worship to African nations.

The Consul, with the Doctor and Captain Pennet, talked the matter over. With the assistance of the garrison, which they could obtain, they might have landed the balloon, but the Doctor feared an accident. After coming so far, it would be a pity to lose all their trouble by some unlucky injury to the balloon. What was to be done? They were quite at a loss.

"What shall we do?" said the Doctor. "I don't quite see any way out of this."

"I've got it," cried the Consul. "You see those islands beyond the port; land your balloon on one of them; surround yourself with a *cordon* of sailors, and you have no risk to run."

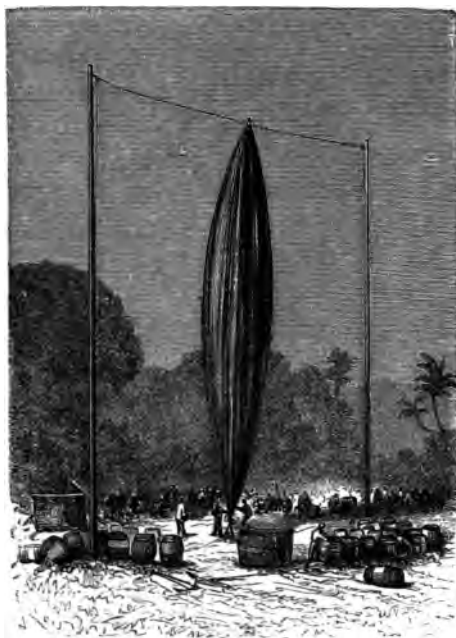
"Capital," said the Doctor; "and we will be at our ease in finishing our preparations."

Captain Pennet agreeing with this view, the *Resolute*, stood over to the isle of Koumbeni; and on the morning of the 16th April, the balloon was safely placed on a clearing between two of the large woods, with which the whole of the island was covered.

Two masts were raised eighty feet high, and placed at a like distance from each other; pulleys fixed at the tops soon hoisted the balloon by means of a transverse cable—it was then entirely empty. The interior balloon was so attached to the exterior one that it rose with it simultaneously. At the lower end of each balloon were fixed the two pipes for the introduction of the hydrogen.

The 17th was passed in arranging the apparatus destined to produce the gas. This was composed of thirty casks, in which the decomposition of the water was to be effected by means of old iron and sulphuric acid, mixed with a large quantity of water. The hydrogen would be collected in an enormous central cask, after having been washed on its passage, and thence it would pass into each

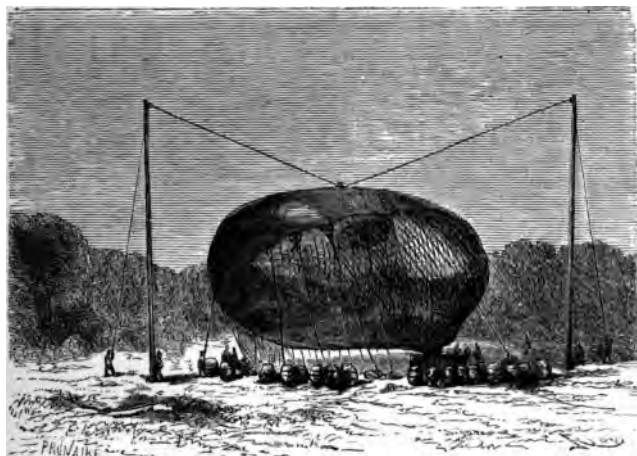
balloon by the pipes for introducing it. In this way each of them could be filled with a perfectly ascertained quantity of gas. For this operation there would have to be employed 1,866 gallons of



sulphuric acid, 16,050 lbs. of iron, and 966 gallons of water! This operation began the following night, or rather about three o'clock in the morning—it lasted nearly eight hours.

On the morrow the balloon, recovered with its net, balanced itself gracefully over the car, held

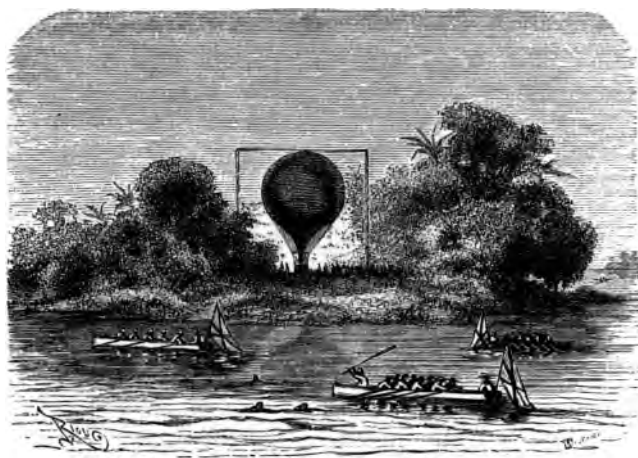
down by a great number of sacks filled with earth. The apparatus for expansion was mounted with great care, and the pipes coming from the balloon were attached to the cylindrical box. The anchors, ropes, instruments, wrappings for the journey, the tent, provisions, and arms, were soon stowed away in the car in the places assigned to them ; a supply of water was obtained at Zanzibar. The 200 lbs.



of ballast were divided into fifty sacks, placed at the bottom of the car but ready to the hand. These preparations were finished about five o'clock in the evening ; sentinels watched incessantly around the island, and the boats of the *Resolute* furrowed the channel.

The negroes continued to manifest their anger by cries, grimaces, and contortions. The priests

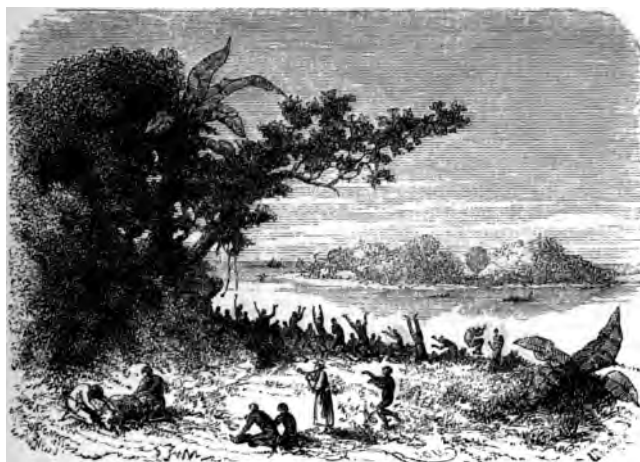
or sorcerers ran about among the irritated groups, keeping up the excitement; some fanatics even tried to reach the island by swimming, but they were soon driven away. Then began their witchcraft and incantations; the rain-makers, who pretend to command the clouds, called the hurricanes and hail-storms to their succour. Others collected leaves of all the different trees of the country, and



boiled them over a little fire, whilst a sheep was killed by having a long needle plunged into its heart. However, spite of all their ceremonies, the sky remained clear, and they got nothing for their mutton and grimaces. The negroes then gave themselves up to all kinds of furious orgies, getting drunk on "tembo," a fiery liquor, procured from the cocoa tree, or on a frightfully heady beer called

“togwa.” Their songs were heard far into the night.

At six o'clock in the evening all met at dinner at Captain Pennet's table. Kennedy kept muttering some words nobody could catch, and kept his eyes fixed on the Doctor. The dinner was not a lively one, the reflection would cross every mind that



they might never again behold the intrepid travelers who were so soon to leave them. They slept that night on board, and at six o'clock the next morning reached the island of Koumbeni.

The balloon poised itself lightly in the breath of the east wind. The sacks of earth which had held it were now replaced by twenty sailors. Captain Pennet and his officers were all present. At this

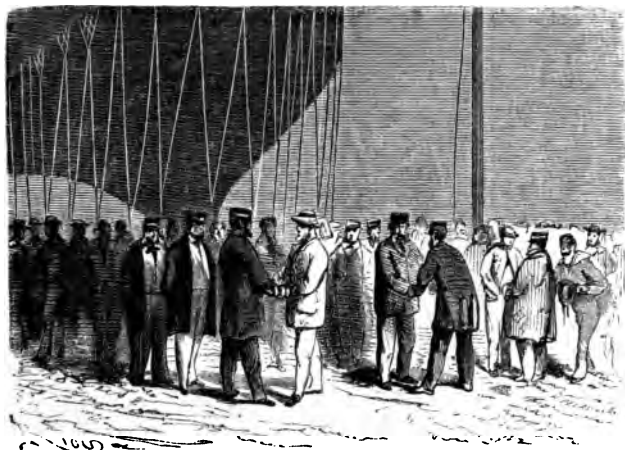
moment Kennedy walked straight to the Doctor, and taking him by the hand, said—

“Is it certain, Samuel, that you go?”

“That is absolutely decided, my dear Dick.”

“I have done all that lay in my power to hinder this voyage?”

“Everything.”



“Then, as my conscience is easy on that score, I'll go with you.”

“I was sure of it,” said the Doctor, his face showing for a moment that he was deeply moved.

The last good-bye was said, and everybody had shaken hands with the three brave travellers. At nine o'clock they all three entered the car; the Doctor lighted his furnace to increase the flame, so as to get rapidly a large amount of heat.

The balloon, which had kept a perfect equilibrium, began to rise at the end of some minutes. The sailors were letting the ropes slip through their hands—the car was already twenty feet high.

“Friends!” cried the Doctor, standing between his two companions, and taking off his hat, “let us give our aerial ship a name which will bring it good luck ; let it be christened The Victoria !”

A loud hurrah ensued—“Long live the Queen ! Long live England !” At this moment the buoyancy of the balloon increased prodigiously. Fergusson, Kennedy, and Joe bade a last adieu to their friends. “Let go all !” cried the Doctor ; and the “Victoria” rose rapidly in the air, whilst the four cannonades of the *Resolute* thundered in her honour.

CHAPTER V.

Across the Straits.—Mzima.—Joe's Proposition.—Uzaramo.—The unfortunate Maizan.—Mount Duthumi.—The Doctor's Maps.—Night on a Nopal Tree.



THE air was clear, the wind moderate. The "Victoria" rose almost perpendicularly to a height of 1,500 feet, which was indicated by a depression of the barometer of very nearly two inches. At that height a more decided current carried the balloon towards the south-west.

What a magnificent sight was unrolled under the eyes of the travellers! The whole island of Zanzibar was seen at a glance, its rich colours were quite distinguishable as it appeared to slip away from under them; the fields looked like patterns of bright colours, and the great woods and copses looked like bouquets of miniature trees. The people of the island looked like insects; the hurrahs and other cries died away in the air, and even the reports of the *Resolute's* cannon could be but faintly heard.

"How beautiful all this is!" cried Joe, breaking silence for the first time.

He got no answer. The Doctor was busy observ-

ing the variations of the barometer, and making notes of the different details of his ascension.



Crossing the Straits.

Kennedy was looking intently at the scene, as if his eyes could not embrace enough of it.

The rays of the sun, added to the heat of the furnace, now further expanded the gas, and the "Victoria" rose to a height of 2,500 feet.

The *Resolute* appeared like a cockboat, and the Coast of Africa to the westward was distinguished by a line of snowy foam.

"You don't speak," said Joe.

"No; we look about us," replied the Doctor, as he directed his glass towards the Continent.

"For my part I can't help speaking."

"Please yourself, Joe; speak as much as you like."

So he gave himself up to the delivery of no end of exclamations—Oh! Ah! By Jove! and other like exclamations kept bursting from his lips.

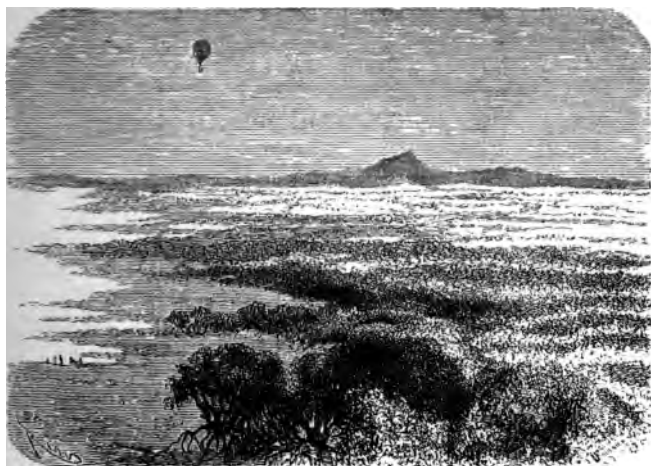
Whilst crossing the sea, the doctor thought it best to keep at the elevation they had attained, for he could then hold in view a much more extended line of coast. The thermometer and barometer suspended in the interior of the tent, and a second barometer outside, was intended for use during the night watches.

At the end of two hours, the "Victoria" travelling at the rate of a little more than eight miles an hour, drew sensibly nearer to the coast.

The Doctor determined to approach nearer to the earth; he therefore lowered the flame of his furnace, and very soon the balloon descended to within three hundred feet of the ground.

They were soon over that part of the East Coast

of Africa which is called Mzima. Thick groves of mangrove trees lined the shores; and as it was then low tide, they were able to see their thick roots torn and broken by the storms of the Indian Ocean. The sandy shoals which had first been seen along the coast were now just visible; and far in the north-west Mount Nguru raised his lofty head to the heavens.



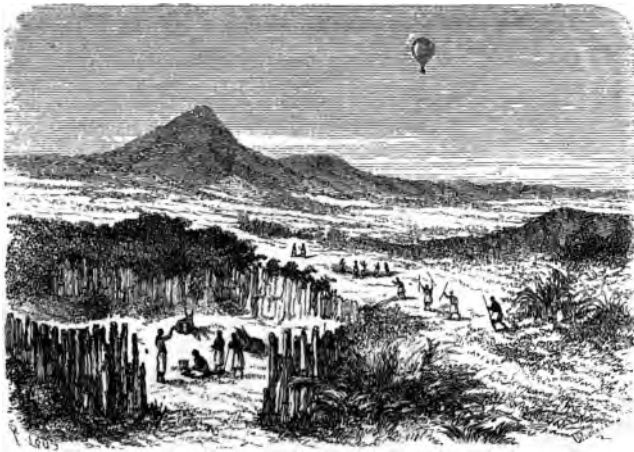
The "Victoria" now reached a village, the first they had passed, which, on reference to the map, the Doctor found was called Kaole; all the assembled population filled the air with howlings of rage, or cries of fear; and arrows were vainly fired against this monster of the air, which hovered mysteriously, far out of the reach of their impotent rage.

The wind now bore round to the south ; but the Doctor did not mind that change of its direction ; on the contrary, it would allow him to follow over the route pursued by Burton and Speke.

Kennedy had become as loquacious as Joe, and they kept up a mutual chorus of admiration.

“Confound coaches !” said one.

“Deuce take steamers !” said the other.



“Don’t talk to me of railways,” said Kennedy, “that run you across a country without letting you see it.”

“A balloon for me,” cried Joe ; “no thought of walking ; and nature displays herself under your very eyes !” .

“What a magnificent sight ; it is perfectly ecstatic ; like a dream as one swings in a hammock.”

"Suppose we were to breakfast," said Joe, whom the keen air had given an appetite.

"A good idea, my lad."

"Oh! the cooking won't take long—some biscuit and preserved meat."

"And coffee for all," said the Doctor. "I will permit you to borrow a little heat from my furnace, there is plenty of it; and that will prevent any accident from fire."

"That would be terrible," said Kennedy. "It is uncommonly like having a powder magazine up above us."

"Not a bit," said Fergusson; "but even if the gas did catch light it would burn little by little, and we should descend to the earth, which would be a nuisance; but don't be afraid, our balloon is hermetically closed."

"Let us fall to then," said Kennedy.

"And here, gentlemen," said Joe, "is some coffee, which I have just made, and which I think will please you."

"The fact is," said the Doctor, "that Joe, among a thousand virtues, has a remarkable talent for making this delicious beverage; what he puts in it I never knew."

"It is no great secret, master," said Joe; "and certainly not up here. I use the three best coffees procurable in equal quantities—those of Mocha, Bourbon, and Rio-Nunez."

Breakfast and coffee despatched, each resumed his post of observation.

The country over which they were passing was of great fertility; numerous winding paths were passed, hidden every now and then under the vaults of brilliant foliage; and they floated over cultivated fields of tobacco, Indian corn, and barley already nearly ripe; whilst here and there the scene was diversified with rice fields, with their straight stalks, and their flowers of gaudy purple.

Near the villages were seen huge cages reared on piles, in which were enclosed the sheep and goats of the inhabitants, to preserve them from the attacks of the leopard. Everywhere the prodigal soil produced a dense and luxurious vegetation.

At every one of the villages which they passed the same scenes were reproduced, the same cries of horror or stupefaction at the sight of the "Victoria" again heard, and the Doctor prudently kept himself well out of arrow flight; as the inhabitants trooping from their huts for some time pursued the travellers with their useless imprecations.

At noon, the Doctor, on consulting his map, found that they were now over the country of Uzaramo. The land beneath seemed absolutely to bristle with cocoa-nut trees and cotton trees, over which the "Victoria" appeared to be enjoying herself. Joe found the vegetation quite natural, as soon as he was told it was really Africa.

Kennedy was watching the hares and quails beneath, which only wanted shooting; but under



Country of the Uzaramo.

the circumstances it would have been only powder and shot thrown away, as there was no possibility of picking up the game.

The aeronauts were travelling at the rate of twelve miles an hour, and very soon reached longitude $38^{\circ} 20'$, with the village of Tounda beneath them.

"There is the spot," said the Doctor, "where Burton and Speke were seized with violent fevers, and for a moment believed that their expedition was at an end; for already, though they were not very far from the coast, fatigue and privations had made themselves severely felt."

In fact, in this part of Africa, a perpetual malaria reigns. The only plan possible for the Doctor to escape it was to rise far above the miasma of that humid ground, from which, under the glowing sun, exhaled such dangerous emanations.

A little farther on they came on a caravan resting in a "kraal," waiting for the coolness of evening to resume its journey.

These kraals are large open spaces surrounded by thick hedges and jungle, where the traders take shelter not only against the attacks of wild beasts, but against those of the predatory tribes of the country. They could see the natives run and scatter themselves at the approach of the "Victoria." Kennedy wanted to have a nearer look at them, but this the Doctor would not hear of.

"The chiefs are armed with muskets," said he,

"and our balloon is a very easy bull's-eye to put a bullet in."

"Would a hole made by a bullet bring us down with a run?" asked Joe.

"Not at once; but very soon that hole would become a large rent, by which all our gas would escape."

"In that case," said Kennedy, "let us keep at a respectful distance from these miscreants. What do they think, I wonder, to see us flit through the air? I believe they have a mind to worship us!"

"Let them if they like," replied the Doctor, "but at a distance. But notice," he continued, "the aspect of the country already changes; vil-lages are rarer, mango trees have disappeared—their growth does not extend beyond this latitude. The ground is becoming hilly, and warns us of our approach to some not distant mountains."

"On this side I seem able to make out some heights already."

"To the west—these are the first hills of the range of Ourizara—doubtless Mount Duthumi, behind which I hope to find a shelter where we can pass the night. I must set my furnace going, as we must keep at a height of five or six hundred feet."

"It was a famous idea of yours, that, sir," said Joe. "The manœuvre is neither difficult nor fatiguing; you turn a stop-cock, and there you are!"

"This is much more comfortable," said the hunter, when the balloon had risen, "the reflection of the sun from that red sand was becoming unbearable."

"What magnificent trees!" suddenly cried Joe; "they are splendid. Why, a dozen of them would make a forest!"

"These are Baobabs," said the Doctor. "Look, there is one which is at least a hundred feet in circumference! Perhaps it was under that very tree that poor Maizan perished in 1845. He was a Frenchman who had pushed on thus far alone, to the village of Deje la Mhora, now beneath us, when he was seized by the chief, fastened by the foot to a baobab tree, and the ferocious negro began to cut him to pieces joint by joint, singing his war-song the while. After making a first cut at the throat of his victim he paused to whet his knife, now blunted with his butchery, but, unable to wait for that, he literally tore the unhappy man's head from his shoulders! The young French explorer was only twenty-six."

"I don't wish to stop there, master," said Joe. "Let us ascend; let us ascend!"

"All the more willingly that Mount Duthumi rises before us. If my reckoning is right we shall have passed it before seven o'clock this evening."

"We are not going to travel at night?" asked the hunter.

"No, as little as possible. With precaution and vigilance it could be done without danger, but it won't do merely to cross Africa; we must see it."

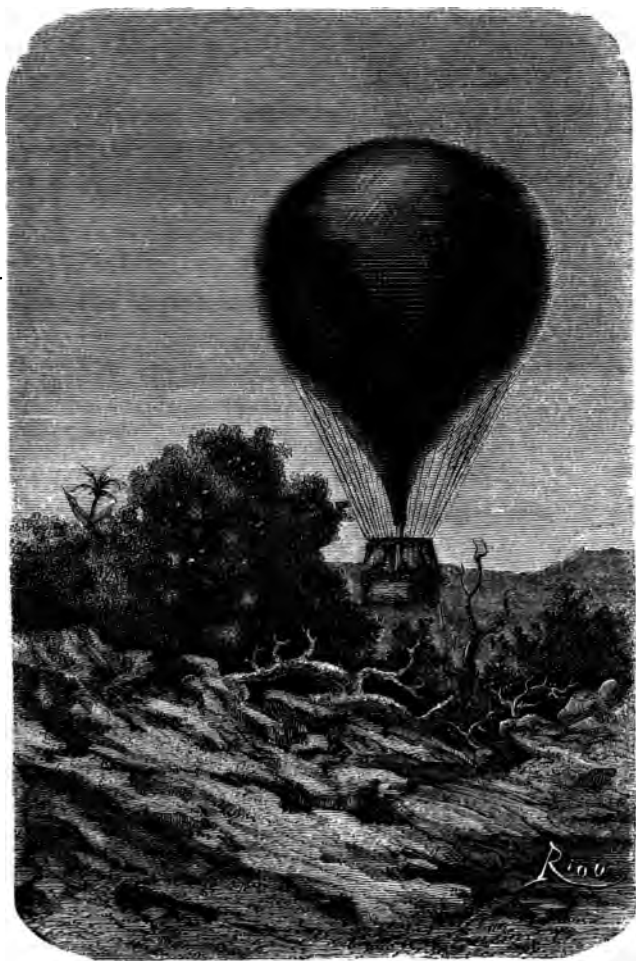
"Hitherto we've had nothing to growl about, master—a country the best cultivated and the most fertile in the world, instead of a desert. Who would believe geographers!"

"Let us wait, Joe; let us wait; we shall see later on."

At half-past six that evening the "Victoria" was opposite Mount Duthumi. To cross it, it was necessary to gain a height of three thousand feet, consequently the Doctor had only to raise the temperature eighteen degrees.

It might almost be said that he managed the balloon with his hand; Kennedy indicated to him the obstacles to surmount, and the "Victoria" rose floating through the air, almost grazing the mountain crest.

At eight o'clock it descended on the opposite side, where the declivity was more gentle; the anchors were thrown out from the car, and one of them meeting the branches of an enormous nopal tree, caught firmly. Immediately Joe slid down the rope, and made it fast in the most secure manner. The silken ladder was thrown down to him, and he ascended smartly. The balloon remained almost motionless, sheltered from the easterly wind.



Fast to a Nopal Tree.

The evening meal was prepared, and our travellers, excited by their aerial trip, made a large breach in their provisions.

"What sort of way have we made to-day?" said Kennedy, still swallowing the last morsels of the meal.

The Doctor determined their position by lunar observations, and consulted the excellent map which he used as a guide. This was that published at Gotha, and was intended by the Doctor to be used during the whole voyage. It contained the itinerary of Burton and Speke to the Great Lakes, Barth's Soudan, Tejean's Lower Senegal, and Dr. Baikie's Delta of the Niger.

Fergusson also possessed a book which contained nearly everything known about the Nile—"The Sources of the Nile," by Dr. Beke, as well as the excellent maps to be found in the Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society of London.

On marking his position on the map he found that their route had taken them two degrees, or one hundred and twenty miles, westward.

Kennedy remarked that the route pointed still to the southward, but that satisfied the Doctor, who wished as much as possible to recognise the traces of former explorers.

The night was divided into three watches, so that two could always be asleep, guarded by the third. The Doctor's watch began at nine o'clock, Kennedy's at midnight, and Joe's at three in the

morning. Then Kennedy and Joe, rolling themselves in their thick rugs, stretched themselves under the tent, and slept peacefully whilst the Doctor kept watch.

CHAPTER VI.

Change of Weather.—Kennedy's Fever.—The Doctor's Physic.—
Journey on Land.—The Basin of Imengé.—Mount Rubeho; Six
thousand Feet high.—A Halt by Day.

THE night passed quietly, but on Saturday morning Kennedy, on waking, complained of lassitude and feverish shiverings.

The weather changed; the heavens, covered with thick clouds, seemed preparing for another deluge. This was the miserable country of Zungomero, where it rains incessantly except for about fifteen days in the month of January.

The heavy rain was not long in assailing the travellers. Beneath them they could see that the roads cut up by "Nullahs," as the mountain torrents are called, had become impassable, choked up as they were everywhere with thorny bushes and gigantic lianas; and they could plainly perceive those sulphuric emanations of which Burton speaks.

"Burton is right," said the Doctor; "it is enough to make one believe that there is a corpse hidden behind every thicket."

"An abominable country," replied Joe. "I don't

think Mr. Kennedy is at all the better for having passed the night in it."

"True enough; I've got a regular fever," said the hunter.

"There's nothing wonderful in that, my dear Dick, for we are in one of the most unhealthy regions of Africa, but we are not going to stay here any longer. Let us be off."

Thanks to a clever manœuvre of Joe's, the anchor was unhooked, and by means of the ladder he regained the car. The Doctor quickly caused the gas to expand, and the "Victoria" took her flight, driven by a tolerably stiff breeze.

A few huts could with difficulty be seen through the pestilential fog, and the face of the country began to change, for it often happens in Africa that an unhealthy region of no great extent, borders closely upon districts perfectly free from malaria.

Kennedy suffered visibly, and the fever overpowered even his vigorous constitution.

"It is no joke being ill," said he, as he rolled himself in his rug and lay down under the tent.

"A little patience, my dear Dick," said the Doctor, "and you will be quickly cured."

"Quickly cured! By Jove, if you've got any drugs in your medicine chest that will put me on my legs, out with them at once. I'll swallow anything you like to give me without looking at it."

"Better than that, Dick. I am going to give you

a febrifuge which will cost nothing. It is very easy. I shall at once ascend above these clouds which are drenching us, and get out of this pestilential atmosphere. Give me ten minutes to expand the hydrogen."

Ten minutes had not slipped by before they had risen above the zone of clouds and rain.

"Wait a minute, Dick, and you will begin to feel the influence of the pure air and of the sun."

"What a remedy!" cried Joe; "it's marvellous."

"Not at all—only natural. They do the same thing in Europe, and elsewhere, every day. I only take my patient into good air."

"This balloon is a little paradise," murmured Kennedy, who was a good deal easier already.

"At all events we are travelling in that direction," said Joe, quite seriously.

The immense masses of cloud heaped together at this moment beneath the balloon, presented a curious sight; they rolled one over the other, the whole surface sending back in glittering reflections the rays of the sun which shone on it.

Still higher went the "Victoria," till a height of four thousand feet was reached, and the thermometer indicated a decided lowering of the temperature. They no longer saw the earth, but about fifty miles to the west, Rubeho raised high its sparkling head, and formed the limit to the country of Ugogo, in longitude $36^{\circ} 20'$.

Although the wind was now carrying them along

at twenty miles an hour, our travellers felt nothing of that rapidity, experiencing no shaking, nor even the sense of locomotion.

Three hours later, the Doctor's prediction was verified; Kennedy no longer shivered with fever, and his appetite began to return.

"Well, this beats the sulphate of quinine," cried he with glee.

"On my word," said Joe, "I shall retire here to spend my old age—my last years."

At ten in the morning it cleared up; a rift appeared in the clouds, and the earth was again visible, and the "Victoria" began slowly to descend. The Doctor wanted a current which would carry him more to the north-east, and he found it at six hundred feet from the ground.

The country before them was now again changed in its aspect—it was broken up and even hilly. In the distant east, the district of Zungomero had disappeared, with the last cocoa trees in that latitude.

Very soon, from the crests of the mountains, bolder and rockier spurs came down, and threatened to arrest their course. Here and there some lofty peaks showed themselves, and it became necessary to keep a bright look-out at every moment for the needle-like cones which seemed to rise unexpectedly.

"Breakers ahead!" shouted Kennedy.

"All right, Dick, we won't touch them." And

really the Doctor managed his balloon with marvellous dexterity.

"If we had had to walk through this muddy country," said he, "we would have had to crawl along through that poisonous slush. Since our departure from Zanzibar half our beasts would have been dead by this time from fatigue. We would have had the appearance of spectres, and have been plunged in despair. We would have been in continual quarrels with our guides and our porters, besides being exposed to their unbridled brutality. All day long a damp, insupportable, overwhelming heat; at night, often intolerable cold; and the stings of flies whose mandibles bite through the thickest clothing, drive one mad. And all this, without taking into account wild beasts and ferocious savages!"

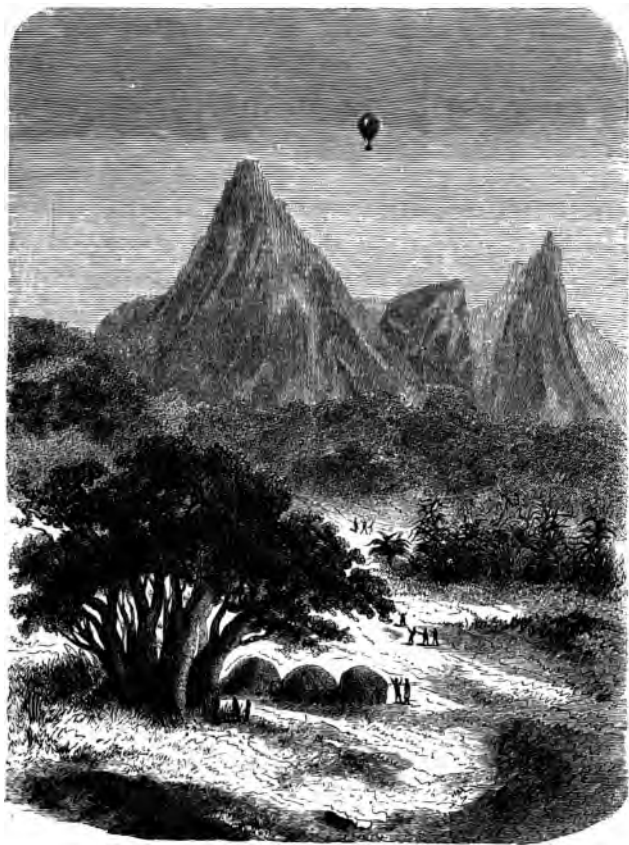
"I have no wish to try it," returned Joe, simply.

"I don't exaggerate anything," said Fergusson. "The stories of the sufferings of travellers, who have had the boldness to venture into these regions, has often brought tears to my eyes."

By eleven o'clock they had left behind the basin of Imengé, where the tribes scattered over the little hills vainly menaced the "Victoria" with their arms, and soon reached the last inequalities of the ground which precede Mount Rubeho. These form the third and most elevated chain of the mountains of Usagara.

"Attention!" cried the Doctor. "We are ap-

proaching Rubeho,—a name, by-the-bye, which means in the language of the country, ‘The



Mount Rubeho.

Passage of the Winds,’—and to give his rocky peaks a clear berth we must go higher still. If

my map is right, we must attain an elevation of at least five thousand feet."

"Shall we often have to rise to such a height?"

"Rarely; the altitude of African mountains is very middling compared with the summits of those of Europe or of Asia. But in any case, our 'Victoria' will have no difficulty in flying over them."

Shortly the gas expanded under the influence of the heat, and the balloon took a marked track upwards. There was nothing dangerous in this expansion of the gas, for even now, at the height of six thousand feet, as indicated by the barometer having fallen nearly eight inches, the balloon was only three-fourths distended.

"Are we going much longer in this direction?"

"With an enormous balloon one could go far—the atmosphere of the earth reaches to a height of thirty-six thousand feet. Brioschi and Gay-Lussac went up till the blood flowed from their mouths and ears, until, in fact, respirable air ceased. Some years ago two brave Frenchmen, Barral and Bixio, ventured into these highest regions, but their balloon got torn——"

"And they fell!" cried Kennedy, quickly.

"Undoubtedly—but as wise men ought to fall, without doing themselves any injury!"

At six thousand feet the density of the air has already sensibly diminished; sound is transported with difficulty, and the voice less distinctly heard; the view of objects becomes confused; vision now

only sees large undetermined masses ; men and animals are no longer visible ; roads look like thongs, and great lakes like pools of water.

The Doctor and his companions felt themselves in an abnormal condition ; an atmospheric current of extreme velocity was bearing them beyond the arid mountains, whose summits were covered with vast fields of everlasting snow, and whose basaltic formation proclaimed the agencies which had been at work ere man had appeared on the earth.

The sun shone in the zenith, and his rays fell straight on these desert heights. The Doctor made an exact drawing of these mountains, showing the manner in which they run ; but the "Victoria" now descended the declivity opposite to Rubeho, passing by the side of a slope well-wooded and covered thickly with trees of a dark and dismal green ; then came mountain crests, and deep ravines running through the desert which lies before the country of Ugogo ; whilst lower down nothing was to be seen but yellow plains, burnt up and cracked with the heat, here and there thinly strewn with saline plants and thorny brushwood.

The horizon was embellished with what looked like bushes, but on nearing it, it proved to be a forest, and here the Doctor began to descend ; the anchors were thrown out, and very soon one of them was hooked fast in the branches of a great sycamore.

Joe, sliding down the rope, saw that the anchor

was secure ; whilst the Doctor kept up just enough of heat to retain the balloon in the air. The wind had entirely gone down.

"Now, then, friend Dick," said the Doctor, "take a couple of your double-barrels, one for yourself and the other for Joe, and see if you two can't bring in some slices of antelope for our dinner."

"Here goes !" cried Kennedy, as he climbed over the car and descended.

The Doctor, relieved of the weight of his two companions, could now extinguish his furnace entirely.

"Mind you don't fly away, master," cried Joe.

"Make yourself easy. I am very safely secured. I shall amuse myself by putting my notes in order. Good sport to you, and take care of yourselves. From my position I can see over the country, and if I see anything at all suspicious, I shall fire my rifle. That is to be the signal for your return."

"Agreed !" cried Kennedy, as he and Joe started on their hunt.

CHAPTER VII.

The Forest of Gum Trees.—Blue Antelopes.—The rallying Signal.—
An unexpected Assault.—Kanyemé.—A Night in the Air.—
Mabunguru.—Jihoue-la-Mkoa.—Water Supply.—Reach Kazeh.



ALL the country, arid, parched, formed of argillaceous earth, cracked and split up by the heat, seemed a desert. Here and there were seen traces of unfortunate caravans in bones of men and beasts, blanched by exposure to the tropical sun, and mixed together in the sandy dust by the wind of the desert.

After a good half-hour's walk, Kennedy and Joe reached a forest of gum trees, which they entered, the eye on the watch and the finger on the trigger. They knew not with whom or what they might have to do.

Joe, though no crack shot, knew very well how to handle a gun.

"Pretty walking it is in this infernal country," said he, kicking up against the pieces of quartz, with which it was thickly strewn.

Kennedy made a sign to his companion to be silent and stand still. They had of course to do

without dogs ; and, however clever Joe might be, he had not the nose of a setter or a pointer.

In the bed of a torrent, where some pools of water were still left, a herd of ten antelopes were quenching their thirst, and these graceful animals, smelling danger, were evidently restless, between every mouthful of water raising their elegant heads quickly, and inhaling through their mobile nostrils the wind blowing from the position of the hunters. Kennedy stalked them, hiding behind some large rocks and stones, whilst Joe stood immovable. At length Dick raised his gun and fired. The herd disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, all but a male antelope, which, struck just behind the shoulder, fell as if struck by lightning.

Kennedy rushed to his quarry. It was a blowe-bock, a magnificent animal, of a pale blue colour running into grey, the belly and inside of its legs as white as snow.

"A very good shot," said Dick. "It is a rare species of antelope ; and I should like to prepare its skin so as to preserve it."

"Do you really mean it, Mr. Dick?"

"Of course I do. Look what a splendid skin."

"But the Doctor would never allow the additional weight."

"Quite right, Joe ; but it is a pity to have to leave all that splendid animal behind us."

"All of it? Oh ! no, Mr. Dick ; we must get some of the nutritive advantages it possesses ;



Antelope Hunting.

and if you will allow me, I shall acquit myself as well as the best master-butcher in London."

"Easy, my friend. Do you not know that as a hunter it is no more trouble for me to skin my game than to shoot it?"

"I am sure of it, Mr. Dick; and if you will then take the trouble to make a fire on these stones,—you will find plenty of dead wood—and in a few minutes I shall be ready to use it."

"That is quickly enough," replied Kennedy; and he proceeded with the construction of his hearth, which in a few minutes later burnt cheerfully.

Joe had cut from the antelope a dozen cutlets, and some excellent slices from the fillet, which he speedily transformed into a savoury grill.

"This will please friend Samuel," thought the hunter.

"Do you know what I am thinking about, Mr. Dick?" suddenly said Joe.

"What you are busy about, no doubt—your steaks."

"Not the least in the world. I was thinking what a pretty figure we should cut if we could not find the balloon."

"What an idea! Do you think the Doctor is going to abandon us?"

"No; but suppose the anchor was to get loose?"

"Impossible! Besides, the Doctor would have no difficulty in descending again. He thoroughly understands the balloon."

"But if the wind carried him off, and he couldn't come back to us?"

"Look here, Joe; a truce to your suppositions, they have nothing pleasant about them."

At this moment a shot rang through the air.

"Hallo!" cried Joe.

"My rifle—I recognise the crack of it."

"A signal!"

"We are in danger!"

"Perhaps he is," said Joe.

"Come on!"

The hunters quickly gathered up the produce of the chase, and retook their way, guided by the branches which Kennedy had broken coming along. The thickness of the wood effectually prevented their seeing the "Victoria," from which, however, they could not be far distant.

A second shot was heard.

"This is pressing," said Joe.

"Good—another report."

"It seems to me like a personal defence."

"Let's hurry!" and they set off at top speed.

Arrived at the skirt of the wood, they saw the "Victoria" in its place, and the Doctor in the car.

"What's going on there?" asked Kennedy.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Joe.

"What do you see?"

"Down there; a troop of negroes besieging the balloon!"

And truly, two miles off some thirty individuals

were crowding round, howling, gesticulating, and dancing wildly round the foot of the sycamore; some, climbing into the tree, had advanced to the highest branches. The danger seemed imminent.

"My master is lost!" cried Joe.

"Come on, Joe; keep cool, and a bright look out. We hold the lives of four of these black rascals in our hands. Push ahead!"

They had cleared a mile at top speed, when another shot came from the car. It hit a big fellow who was hoisting himself by the rope attached to the anchor, and a lifeless body fell from branch to branch, till it hung suspended twenty feet from the ground, its two arms and legs swaying about in the air.

"Hallo!" cried Joe, stopping; "how the deuce does that animal there hold on?"

"It don't matter," cried Kennedy; "let us run, let us run."

"Ah! Mr. Kennedy," cried Joe, bursting out laughing; "by his tail! 'tis by his tail! A monkey! they are nothing but monkeys!"

"That's better than men at all events," cried Kennedy, as he threw himself into the midst of the howling band.

It proved to be a troop of cynocephalous monkeys, formidable enough to encounter, as they are fierce and brutal and horrible to look at, with their doglike heads and muzzles, from which they get their name.

A few shots settled the matter, and the grimacing

troop ran away, leaving several of their number on the ground.

In an instant Kennedy caught hold of the ladder; Joe hoisted himself into the sycamore and loosened the anchor, the car lowered to just where he stood, and he regained it without difficulty. A few minutes after, the "Victoria" rose into the air and took an easterly course, impelled by a moderate breeze.

"That was an assault," said Joe. "We thought you were besieged by the natives."

"It was luckily only monkeys," replied the Doctor.

"At a distance there didn't seem much difference, my dear Samuel."

"Nor even when near," said Joe.

"Be that as it may," replied Fergusson, "that attack by monkeys might have had very serious consequences. If the anchor had lost hold under their repeated shakings, who knows where the wind might have carried me?"

"What did I say to you, Mr. Kennedy?"

"You were right, Joe; but right as you were, you were at that moment getting ready the antelope steaks, and my appetite is as good as ever!"

"I believe it," said the Doctor; "antelope meat is delicious."

"Try it then, sir," said Joe; "dinner is ready!"

"By my faith," said Dick, "these slices of venison have a game flavour not to be despised."

"I should like to live on them all my days," said Joe, "especially with a glass of grog."

The Doctor took Joe's hint, the grog was duly prepared, and swallowed reflectively.

"Well, Dick, are you sorry you accompanied us?"

"I should like to have seen what would have prevented me," said Dick, with a determined air.

It was now four o'clock in the afternoon; the "Victoria" encountered a more rapid current, the ground gradually rose, and soon the barometer indicated a height of 1,500 feet above the level of the sea. The Doctor was obliged to keep up his balloon by considerably expanding the gas, and the furnace was kept going incessantly.

At seven the "Victoria" was over the basin of Kanyemé, and the Doctor at once recognised the vast clearing of ten miles in extent, with its villages hidden amid the verdure of baobab trees, &c. Here resides one of the Sultans of the country of Ugogo, and here civilisation is not perhaps so backward; members of the family are not often sold into slavery, but beasts and people all live together in round huts, built without timber, and looking for all the world like haycocks.

Past Kanyemé the soil became arid and rocky; but in a fertile valley, at some distance from Mda buru, vegetation reappeared in all its luxuriance. The wind went down with the day, and the atmosphere seemed to sleep. In vain the Doctor tried

for currents at different heights, so seeing this perfect calm in nature, he kept the balloon at an altitude of about 1,000 feet, and resolved to pass the night there. The "Victoria" was immovable in the deep silence of the magnificent starlight night. Dick and Joe sought their quiet couches and slept soundly during the Doctor's watch, when he at midnight was relieved by the Scot.

"If the least accident happens, wake me," said the Doctor; "and above all keep your eye on the barometer; it is the guide on which we must all depend."

The night was cold; there were 27° difference between its temperature and that of the day. With the advent of darkness had arisen the nocturnal concert of animals, which had been driven from their dens by hunger and thirst; the soprano of frogs was mingled with the yelping of jackals, whilst the deep bass of the lion swelled the sound of that living orchestra.

On retaking his post the Doctor perceived that the direction of the wind had changed during the night, and he saw from the compass that he was drifting in a north-east direction. In the last two hours they had travelled about thirty miles, and were now over Mabunguru, a stony country, strewn with blocks of syenite of a beautiful polish, and conical masses, like the rocks at Karnak, stood up from the ground like so many druidical dolmens. The ground was also covered with the whitened

bones of buffaloes and elephants; there were few trees, except to the eastward, where amid dense woods were hid the native villages.

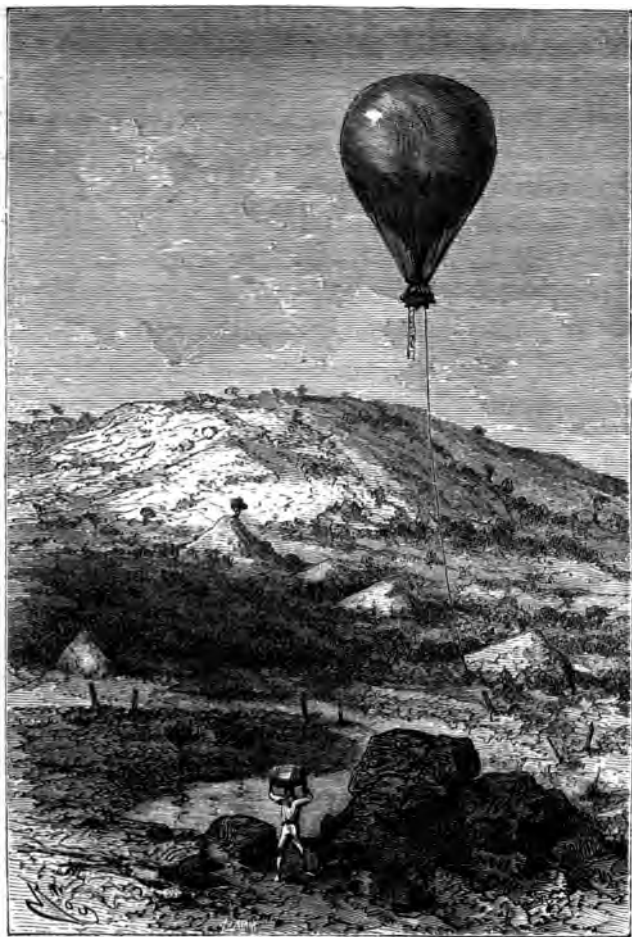
"We are on the right road," said the Doctor; "there is Jihoué-la-Mkoa, where we will stop for a little time, as I want some water for my furnace. Try to hook on to something."

"I don't see any trees," said Dick. "Let us try nevertheless. Joe, throw out the anchors."

The balloon, gradually losing its ascensional power, approached the earth; the anchors began to drag, and presently one of them caught in a fissure of a rock, and the "Victoria" came to a stand-still.

The map showed several pools in the neighbourhood of Jihoué-la-Mkoa, and Joe descending, soon found one not far from a little desert village, took in his supply of water and returned, having seen nothing but some elephant traps, and indeed nearly fallen into one, where lay a half-devoured carcass; those and some fruit like a medlar, of which monkeys are fond, completed his list of discoveries. The Doctor recognised the fruit as that of the "Mbenbu," a tree very abundant in the western part of Jihoué-la-Mkoa.

As Fergusson was glad to get away from this inhospitable country, the water was got into the car without difficulty, for the ladder nearly reached the ground, and Joe, freeing the anchor, mounted nimbly up beside his master. Soon the furnace



Jihoue-la-Mkoa.

was at work, and the "Victoria" proceeded on her aerial voyage.

They were now about a hundred miles from Kazeh, an important establishment in the interior of Africa, where, thanks to a south-east current, our travellers might hope to arrive that day. They were travelling at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, and over a land so elevated that the management of the balloon was not so easy; but the Doctor did not wish to expand the gas too much, and followed very cleverly the sinuosities of a steep declivity, passing close to the villages of Thembo and Tura-wels. This latter country forms part of Unyamwesey, a magnificent district, where the trees attain the largest dimensions, among others the cacti especially, which here are gigantic.

At two o'clock, the weather magnificent, and a burning sun overhead which prevented the least current of air, the "Victoria" hovered over the town of Kazeh, situated 350 miles from the coast.

"We left Zanzibar at nine o'clock in the morning," said the Doctor, looking at his notes, "and after two days of voyaging across country, during which, including our deviations, we have travelled 500 geographical miles, here we are at Kazeh! Burton and Speke took four months and a half to come the same road!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Kazeh.—A noisy Market.—Appearance of the “Victoria.”—The Wanganga.—The Sons of the Moon.—The Doctor’s Walk.—Population.—The Royal Palace.—The Sultan’s Wives.—A Royal Drunkard.—Joe is worshipped.—How they Dance in the Moon.—Two Moons at a time.—Instability of Divine Honours.

KAZEH, an important place though it is in Central Africa, is by no means a town; truth to tell, there is no town at all in the interior. Kazeh is nothing but a collection of six vast excavations. In these are enclosed the cottages, the huts for slaves, with little courtyards and little gardens carefully cultivated; onions, sweet potatoes, melons and mushrooms of the most exquisite flavour are grown there in perfection.

Unyamwesey is *par excellence* the Land of the Moon, the fertile and splendid garden of Africa; in its centre is the district of Unyanembé, a delicious country in which some families of Omani, who are Arabs of the purest origin, lead a lazy and happy life. They have long carried on the trade with the interior of Africa and Arabia, and traffic in gums, ivory, chintzes and calicoes, and slaves. These equatorial regions are furrowed by their caravans, which seek on all sides for articles

of luxury or delight for these wealthy merchants, who, in the midst of their women and servants, lead in that charming land an existence free from trouble, and generally spent in as horizontal a position as possible—always reclining, laughing, smoking, or sleeping.

Thus, then, these excavations, these native huts, these vast cleared spaces in which the markets are held, these fields of hemp and gardens full of vegetables, these beautiful trees, and fresh and fragrant shades,—these altogether make up Kazeh.

Here is the general rendezvous for caravans—those of the south with their slaves and their cargoes of ivory, those of the west with their cotton cloths and glass beads for the tribes around the Great Lakes.

In the markets, too, there reigns a perpetual agitation, a noise to which it is impossible to give a name, composed as it is of the cries of the half-bred porters, the sound of drums and cornets, the neighing of mules, the braying of asses, the songs of women, the squalling of children, and the blows given by the reed-stick of the Jamadar, or chief of the caravan, who seems to conduct this pastoral symphony.

There also were exhibited for sale, without an attempt at order, or rather in charming disorder, fabrics of the most glaring colours, glass beads, ivory, the tusks of the rhinoceros and the teeth of the shark, honey, tobacco, and cotton; and there

were in use the strangest methods of trading, for the price of every article depended upon the eagerness of the intending purchaser to possess it.

In a moment all this agitation, this constant movement, and this noise suddenly ceased. The "Victoria" had just made its appearance in the heavens, and, floating majestically over them, began slowly to descend, without swerving from its vertical position. Men, women, and children, slaves, merchants, Arabs, and negroes, all disappeared, and crept into the tembés or under the huts.

"My dear Samuel," said Kennedy, "if we continue to produce such wonderful effects, we shall hardly be able to establish commercial relations with these good folks."

"There is one commercial operation," said Joe, "which I think could be carried out very easily. That is, to descend quietly and carry off all the most valuable merchandise, without troubling ourselves about the merchants. That's the way to grow rich."

"Very good," said the Doctor, "but the natives have only been scared for a moment; superstition and curiosity will soon bring them back."

"You think so, sir?"

"We shall soon see; but it will be prudent not to approach too near. The 'Victoria' is not an ironclad, and is proof neither against a ball nor an arrow."

“Do you intend then, my dear Samuel, to hold a parley with these Africans?”

“If it can be done, why not?” replied the Doctor. “We are pretty certain to find at Kazeh, Arab merchants somewhat civilised, or, at least, not quite savage. I remember that both Burton and Speke speak highly of the hospitality of the inhabitants of the place; so I think we may make the attempt.”

The “Victoria” during this conversation had been slowly descending, and now hooked one of her anchors into the top of a tree near the market-place.

At this moment all the population reappeared out of their holes, popping their heads out with a great deal of circumspection; several “Waganga,” easily to be recognised by their insignia of conical shell-work, boldly advanced—these were the sorcerers or priests of the place. They carried at their girdles little black gourds, plastered with grease, and divers magical objects of a dirtiness quite in keeping.

By degrees the crowd came and joined them, the women and children surrounded them, drums again began their noise, and clapping their hands together, they extended them towards heaven.

“That is their way of beseeching any favour,” said the Doctor; “and if I am not mistaken, we shall have great parts to play in the drama.”

“Never fear, sir!” said Joe; “we will manage it.”

"Oh! as for you, Joe, most likely they will make a god of you."

"That will do for me, sir; I dare say it is a very good part."

Just then one of the sorcerers, a "Myanga," made a gesture, and immediately all the clamour was hushed into silence. He addressed a few words to the travellers, but in a language unknown to them.

The Doctor, without having understood a word, uttered by chance some words of Arabic, and was immediately replied to in that language.

The orator delivered a highly flourished, long-winded speech, from which the Doctor quickly gathered that the "Victoria" was plainly taken for the Moon in person, and that that amiable goddess had deigned to come down to the town with her three sons—an honour which would never be forgotten in that land, beloved of the Sun.

The Doctor replied, with great dignity, that the Moon every thousand years made a journey throughout her empire, having found the need of showing herself nearer to her worshippers; and he begged of them not to permit the presence of the divinity to stand in the way of their making known all their wants and desires.

The sorcerer replied in his turn, that the Sultan, the "Mwani," who had been ill for years, besought the help of heaven, and he begged the Son of the Moon to visit him.

The Doctor communicated this invitation to his companions.

"And you really mean to go and see this negro king?" said Dick.

"Certainly; these appear to me very well disposed people; the atmosphere is still, there is not a breath of wind. We have nothing to fear for the 'Victoria.'"

"But what will you do?"

"Never fear, Dick; with a little medicine I will manage to pull through."

Then, addressing the crowd—

"The Moon, taking pity on the sovereign dear to the children of Unyamwes, has entrusted his cure to us. Let him prepare to receive us."

The shouts, the songs, the demonstrations redoubled; all that vast swarm of black heads was again in motion.

"Now, my friends," said the Doctor, "we must look to everything, for we may be compelled to start at a moment's notice. You, Dick, will remain in the car and keep the furnace going, so as to have a sufficient ascending force, the anchor is firm and fast, so there is nothing to fear. I am going to descend to the earth; Joe will accompany me, only he will remain at the foot of the ladder."

"What! you are going alone to see this nigger?" said Dick.

"What, sir!" cried Joe, "do not you wish me to follow you to the end?"

"No, I shall go alone ; these good folks having taken it into their heads that their great goddess the Moon has come to visit them, I shall be protected by superstition ; so don't be afraid about me, and each of you remain at the post I have assigned you."

"Well, since you wish it," said Dick.

"Watch the expansion of the gas."

"That's settled."

The natives redoubled their cries, and loudly implored celestial aid.

"Hallo !" cried Joe, "they seem to be getting a little too imperious towards their good Moon and her divine sons."

The Doctor, provided with his little medicine-chest, descended to the ground, preceded by Joe, who, looking as grave and dignified as he could, sat down at the foot of the ladder, with his legs crossed under him like a Turk ; the crowd making a respectful circle round about him.

Whilst this was going on, the Doctor, conducted to the sound of all sorts of instruments, and surrounded by the sorcerers performing religious dances, proceeded slowly towards the royal "tembé," which was situated at some distance from the town. It was about three o'clock, and the sun shone brightly—as indeed she ought, under such circumstances.

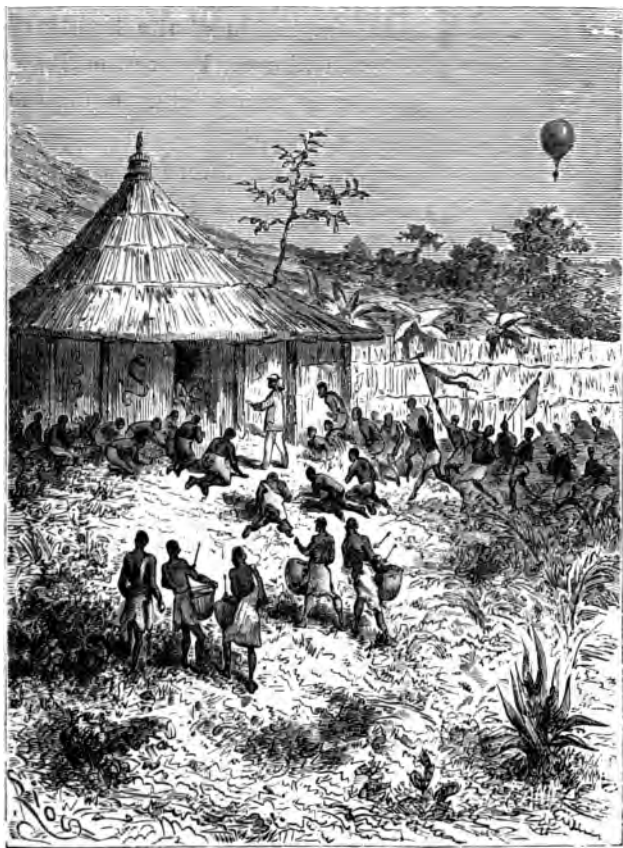
The Doctor walked with dignity, the "Waganga" surrounding him and keeping off the crowd.

Fergusson was met by the natural son of the Sultan, a likely enough lad, who, according to the custom of the country, was the sole heir to the paternal wealth, to the exclusion of the legitimate children. He prostrated himself before the Son of the Moon, who graciously raised him to his feet again.

Three-quarters of an hour afterwards, in the midst of all the luxuriance of a tropical vegetation, this enthusiastic procession reached the palace of the Sultan, a kind of square building, called Ititenya, and situated on the slope of a little hill. A description of verandah, formed by the thatch of the roof, reached along the exterior, supported by wooden posts, which had some pretension to being carved. Long lines of red clay ornamented the walls, intended to represent the figures of men and serpents; the latter looking a good deal more natural than the former. The roof did not rest closely upon the walls, so that the air could circulate freely, otherwise there were no windows and scarcely what could be called a door.

The Doctor was received with all the honours by the guards and favourites—men of a handsome race, the Wanyamwesi, a pure type of the populations of Central Africa, strong and robust, well-made, and of graceful carriage. Their hair, divided into a great number of little locks, fell upon their shoulders, and their cheeks were striped from the

temples to the mouth with incisions coloured black or blue. Their ears, frightfully distended, supported



Palace of the African Sultan.

discs of wood and thick plates of gum-copal; their dress consisted of brilliantly coloured calico, and

the soldiers were armed with the assagai, the bow and barbed arrows, poisoned with the juices of the Euphorbia, with the cutlass, and with the "cime"—a long sabre with saw-like teeth, and also with little battle-axes.

The Doctor entered the palace. There, notwithstanding the illness of the Sultan, the uproar, already bad enough, became still worse on the Doctor's arrival. He observed that a quantity of hares' tails and zebra skins were suspended from the lintel as talismans, and on entering he was received by his Majesty's women, to the harmonious sounds of the "upatu"—a sort of cymbal made out of the bottom of a copper pan, and the crash of the "kilindo"—a drum five feet in height fastened to the trunk of a tree, and on which two *virtuosi* hammered with all their might with their fists.

Most of the women were very good-looking, and laughingly smoked tobacco and hemp out of great black pipes. As well as could be distinguished beneath their gracefully draped robes they seemed well-made, and wore a kind of skirt or kilt fastened round their waists. Six of them, although placed in a corner by themselves and reserved for a cruel fate, were not the least gay of the company. These women were those who, at the Sultan's death, were to be buried alive with him, to divert and amuse him in his eternal solitude.

The Doctor, having taken in the whole scene at a glance, advanced to the wooden bed where lay

the sovereign. There he saw a man of about forty, perfectly brutalized by orgies of all kinds, and for whom nothing could be done. His illness, which had lasted for years, was nothing but perpetual drunkenness. This royal drunkard had a little while before lost all consciousness, and all the ammonia in the world would never put him on his feet again.

The favourites and women bending their knees, bowed down during this solemn visit.

By means of some drops of a strong cordial the Doctor reanimated for an instant this besotted wretch; the Sultan made a movement, and for a carcass that had given no sign of existence for hours, this symptom was received by a fresh burst of cries in honour of the physician. But he, who had had enough of it, by a rapid movement dispersed his too demonstrative adorers, walked out of the palace, and started towards the "Victoria." It was six o'clock in the evening.

Joe, during his absence, waited quietly at the foot of the ladder, the crowd paying him the greatest respect. Like a real Son of the Moon he let them do so. For a divinity he seemed a jolly fellow enough, not at all proud, and even familiar with the young nigger ladies, who never left off staring at him.

"Worship away, young ladies, worship away, I am a jolly devil, I assure you, although I am the son of a goddess."



They brought him propitiatory gifts, such as were usually laid in the fetich huts, consisting of ears of barley and of "pombé."

Joe thought the right thing to do was to taste this kind of strong beer, but his palate, though well used to gin and whisky, could not bear the strength of it, he made a frightful grimace, which his adorers took for an amiable smile. And then the young girls, mingling their voices in a drawling chant, executed a solemn dance round him.

"Ah! you call that dancing," said he. "I am not going to sit here still for that sort of thing. I'll show you what we call dancing in my country."

And he broke out into a most astounding jig, turning about, kicking out, twisting round, feet, knees, and hands all in motion, making the most extravagant contortions and incredible poses, accompanied with wonderful grimaces, so giving the native population a very strange idea of how the gods dance in the Moon.

Then, all these Africans, as imitative as monkeys, began at once to reproduce all his steps, his gambols, his hoppings; they lost not an action, forgot not an attitude, and then began such a row, such an uproar, that it is impossible even to give a faint idea of it.

When the fun was at its height, Joe perceived the Doctor. He was returning in hot haste in the midst of a howling and disorderly crowd: the sorcerers and the chiefs seemed terribly excited;

they surrounded him, crushed up against him, and threatened him.

This was a change with a vengeance! What had happened? Had the Sultan unfortunately succumbed under the hands of his celestial physician?

Kennedy from his post saw the danger without understanding the reason of it.

The balloon, strongly inflated, strained at the rope that held it, as if impatient to mount into the air. The Doctor reached the foot of the ladder. A superstitious fear had as yet kept back the crowd and hindered it from proceeding to offer any violence to his person; he rapidly ascended the rounds of the ladder, and Joe followed him with agility.

"There's not a moment to lose," said his master to him. "Never mind freeing the anchor; we must cut the rope: follow me."

"What is it all about?" said Joe, as he climbed into the car.

"What has happened?" cried Kennedy, rifle in hand.

"Look there!" said the Doctor, pointing to the horizon.

"Well?" asked Dick.

"Well! The moon!"

And there, indeed, rose the moon, red and splendid—a globe of fire upon a ground of azure.

It was really she! She and the "Victoria!"

Were there two moons, or were the strangers nothing but impostors, plotters, and false gods? Such were the natural reflections of the crowd, and hence their changed behaviour.

Joe could not restrain a burst of laughter.

The population of Kazeh, comprehending that their prey had escaped, uttered prolonged howls, and bows and muskets were pointed at the balloon. But one of the sorcerers made a sign. Instantly all arms were lowered, and he began to climb up the tree with the intention of seizing the anchor-rope, and so pulling the machine to the ground.

Joe darted to the spot where the rope was attached to the car, axe in hand.

"Shall I cut?" said he.

"Wait a bit," replied the Doctor.

"But this nigger—?"

"Perhaps we shall be able to save our anchor; there's always time to cut."

The sorcerer, having climbed into the tree, managed so well, that, by breaking the branches, he freed the anchor, which, violently pulled on by the balloon, caught him between the legs, and thus seated as on horseback, he started for the regions of the upper air.

The bewilderment of the crowd was immense to see one of its Waganga thus carried off into space.

"Hurrah!" cried Joe, while the "Victoria," thanks to its buoyancy, rose with great rapidity.



Carrying off the Sorcerer.

"He holds on well," said Dick, "a little trip won't do him any harm."

"Shall we let this nigger go slap?" asked Joe.

"For shame!" said the Doctor, "we will very quietly replace him on *terra firma*, and doubtless after such an adventure his magical power will be wonderfully increased in the belief of his contemporaries."

"I shouldn't be surprised if they made a god of him," said Joe.

The "Victoria" had now attained a height of about 1,000 feet. The nigger held on to the rope like grim death; his eyes were fixed in his head, and terror and astonishment had rendered him dumb.

A light wind from the westward drove the balloon beyond the town, and, half an hour later, the Doctor, seeing the country desert, lowered the heat of the furnace and approached the earth.

At twenty feet from the ground the nigger quickly made up his mind, and throwing himself off, luckily lighted on his legs and started as hard as he could run for Kazeh, without ever looking behind him; whilst thus suddenly disballasted the "Victoria" reascended.

CHAPTER IX.

Signs of a Storm.—The Country of the Moon.—Future of the African Continent.—The Country at Sunset.—Flora and Fauna.—The Storm.—The Zone of Fire.—The Star-spangled Sky.

“EE what it is,” said Joe, “to call yourselves Sons of the Moon without her permission ! That satellite was very near doing us a dirty trick. Did you by any chance, sir, compromise her reputation by your physic?”

“By-the-bye,” said Dick, “who was this Sultan of Kazeih?”

“An old drunken sot, nearly half dead, and whose loss won’t be very severely felt; but the moral is, that honours are ephemeral, and it does not do to acquire too great a taste for them.”

“So much the worse,” said Joe, “to be a god, to be worshipped, suits me exactly. When up comes the moon, all red in the face, which proves she is not in a good temper.”

Whilst this conversation was going on, and Joe was examining the star of the night from quite a new point of view, heavy clouds from the north began to cover the heavens—black and sinister-looking clouds. A brisk wind, met with at three

hundred feet from the earth, drove the "Victoria" towards the north-north-east; and although the azure vault above them was clear, the air felt heavy and oppressive.

About eight o'clock at night, our travellers were in longitude $32^{\circ} 40'$ and latitude $4^{\circ} 17'$; the atmospheric currents, under the influence of an approaching storm, drove them along at five-and-thirty miles an hour. The fertile and undulating plains of Mfuto passed rapidly under their feet. It was a magnificent sight, and was duly admired.

"We are fairly in the Country of the Moon," said the Doctor; for he kept to the name which antiquity had given it, doubtless because the moon has always been worshipped there. "It is truly a magnificent country, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere a vegetation so beautiful."

"It wouldn't be very natural to find it about London," said Joe; "but it would be uncommonly pleasant. Why are all these beautiful things only to be found in savage countries like this?"

"And who knows," replied the Doctor, "that some day this country will not become the centre of civilisation? The nations of the future will perhaps be supported here, when the regions of Europe will have been exhausted to support their inhabitants."

"Do you believe that?" said Kennedy.

"Yes, I do, my dear Dick. Look at the march

of events, consider the successive migrations of nations, and you will arrive at the same conclusion. Asia was the first nurse of the world—was not she? For four thousand years, perhaps, she works, she becomes prolific, she produces; but when the golden harvests of Homer cease, her children abandon her exhausted and withered bosom. You see them then throw themselves into Europe, young and powerful, who has provided them for two thousand years; but already she is losing her fertility, her productive powers diminish every day; those new diseases which every year attack the products of the earth, those false harvests, so to speak, those insufficient resources, all announce a vitality which is being dried up, and an approaching exhaustion. Thus we see new nations rushing to the nourishing breasts of America, as a source not inexhaustible, but as yet unexhausted. In time, this new continent will become old; her virgin forests will fall beneath the axe of industry, her soil will become enfeebled from producing too much, because too much was asked of it. There, where two laughing harvests gladden the year, scarcely one will be able to be got from a land at the end of its resources. Then Africa will offer to new races the treasures accumulated for centuries in her bosom; those climes, fatal to foreigners, will have become purified by tillage and drainage; those scattered streams will unite in one common bed to form a great navigable artery. And this

country, over which we float, richer, more fertile, and more endowed with life than the others, will become some great kingdom, where discoveries will be made more astonishing than electricity or steam."

"Ah! sir," said Joe, "I should like to see that!"

"You must get up very early in the morning to do that, my lad! I fancy it would very likely be a very tiresome and wearisome epoch, in which industry would absorb all to its own profit; so many machines would be made that they would devour the men who made them. I often imagine that the last day of the world will be when some clever fellow makes a great boiler with a pressure of millions to the square inch, which will burst and blow the globe to atoms."

"Well, well," said the Doctor; "let us cease these discussions and content ourselves with admiring this land of the Moon, since it has been our good fortune to see it."

The sun, shooting his last rays beneath the masses of heaped-up clouds, glorified with a crest of gold every inequality of the ground; gigantic trees, flowering groves, mosses growing close to the soil—all received a share of that luminous glory. The country, slightly undulating, rose here and there into little conical hills; not a mountain was to be seen on the horizon; immense fences of brambles, impenetrable brushwood, and thorny jungles, divided the many clearings where the vil-

lages were seen ; gigantic euphorbias surrounded them with natural fortifications, their branches intertwined with the coral-like limbs of the arbutus.

Soon Malagazari, the principal affluent of Lake Tanganayika, was seen winding its serpentine course amid masses of verdure, whilst numerous watercourses, born of torrents swollen by the rains, and lakes, sunk in their clayey beds, rush down to swell its waters.

From the "Victoria," our travellers beheld a perfect network of cascades, covering the whole of the western face of the country. Cattle with enormous humps pastured amid the rich meadows, and disappeared beneath the tall grasses ; forests, perfuming the air, seemed to the eye like large bouquets ; but in these bouquets lions, leopards, hyenas, tigers, might take refuge and shelter from the last heats of the tropical day. Sometimes the edge of the brushwood would wave to and fro as an elephant made his way through it, and the cracking of the branches could be heard as they yielded before his ivory tusks.

"What a hunting-ground !" cried Dick enthusiastically. "A shot fired in the open forest with your eyes shut would be certain to bring down some game worth bagging. Can't I get down and have a try ?"

"Certainly not, my dear Dick ; just look what a threatening night it is, and a storm brewing too, and storms in this country are terrible, I can tell

you; the very ground is one immense electric battery."

"You are right, sir," said Joe, "the heat has become suffocating; the wind, too, has completely fallen. One feels that something is going to happen."

"The atmosphere is surcharged with electricity," said the Doctor, "and every living being is sensible of this state of the air, which precedes the strife of the elements. I avow, I am quite impregnated with the feeling myself."

"Well, then, in that case, let us descend."

"On the contrary, Dick, I would much rather mount higher. I only fear being drawn out of my route by some crossing of the atmospheric currents."

"Do you wish, then, to change the direction we have been pursuing?"

"If I can, I shall try to get borne northward for seven or eight degrees. I shall try to get up to the presumed latitude of the Sources of the Nile; perhaps we may find some traces of Speke's expedition, or even the caravan of De Heuglin. If my calculations are correct, we are at longitude $32^{\circ} 40'$, and I should like to go right beyond the equator."

"Look there!" cried Kennedy, interrupting his companion; "look at these hippopotami creeping about out of these pools, and these crocodiles noisily snuffing the air."

"They feel suffocated," said Joe; "but travelling



Hippopotami at Play.

in this jolly way we can despise all such mischievous vermin. But look there, sir; look, Mr. Kennedy, at these bands of animals—there must be two hundred of them; they are wolves.”

“No, Joe, they are wild dogs, and a famous race they are; they do not fear to attack even the lion. A meeting with them is the most terrible thing that can befall a traveller, for they immediately tear him in pieces.”

“Good! Then it won’t be Joe who will try to muzzle them!”

The silence which reigned around became more intense under the influence of the storm. It seemed as if the air had become too dense to transmit a sound, as a hall hung with tapestry loses all sonorousness.

The ring-doves, the coroneted cranes, the red and blue jays, the mocking-bird, and the gnat-snappers, had all disappeared under the foliage of the large trees. All nature proclaimed the advent of an approaching cataclysm.

At nine in the evening the “Victoria” remained motionless over Mséné, a vast collection of villages, scarcely distinguishable in the darkness. At times the glance of some wandering ray on the sullen water showed ditches regularly laid out, and by a last gleam of sunlight the eye could catch a glimpse of still and sombre palm trees, tamarinds, sycamores, and gigantic euphorbia.

“This is stifling,” said the Scot, drawing a full

breath of the rarefied air. "We don't move an inch ; shall we descend ?"

"But the storm ?" said the Doctor, also uneasy.

"If you dread being dragged away by the wind, it seems to me there is no other course to pursue."

"Perhaps the storm will not burst to-night," said Joe, "the clouds are very high."

"It is that very reason which makes me hesitate to pass through them. We would have to ascend to an extreme height, to lose sight of the earth, and all night long we would be unable to know whether we advanced at all, or which way we went if we did so."

"Do you decide, my dear Samuel ; time presses."

"It is very annoying that the wind should have fallen," said Joe ; "it would have taken us far from the storm."

"That is indeed to be regretted, my friends, for these clouds are a source of danger to us. They enclose opposing currents, which might entwine us in their vortex, and lightnings capable of setting us on fire ; on the other hand, the force of the squall might precipitate us to the earth, if we cast anchor on the top of some tree."

"What, then, is to be done ?"

"We must keep the 'Victoria' in a middle zone, between the perils of earth and heaven. We have plenty of water for the furnace, and our two hundred pounds of ballast are untouched ; in case of need I shall make use of them."

"We will watch with you," said Dick.

"No, no, friends. Put the provisions under shelter, and lie down. I will wake you if it should be necessary."

"But had not you better take some rest yourself, sir, while nothing threatens?"

"No, thank you, my lad, I prefer watching. We are quite motionless, and if circumstances don't change, to-morrow we shall be exactly where we are."

"Good evening, sir."

"Good-night, if it is possible."

Kennedy and Joe stretched themselves under their rugs, and the Doctor was left alone to watch for the expected storm.

The dome of clouds began insensibly to lower, and the darkness became profound; the black vault closed round the earth as if it would crush it. Suddenly a violent flash of lightning, quick and incisive, shot through the darkness, nor had the rent made by it in the clouds closed ere a frightful peal of thunder shook the depths of the heavens.

"Look out!" cried the Doctor.

The two sleepers, awakened by the dreadful noise, placed themselves at his orders.

"Shall we descend?" said Kennedy.

"No, the balloon could not bear it. We must ascend before these clouds resolve themselves into water, and the winds are unchained."

And he drove the flame of the furnace briskly through the spirals of the serpentine.

Tropical storms are developed with a rapidity



In the Hurricane.

only comparable with their violence. A second flash tore through the night, and was followed by twenty others instantly. The whole heavens were

a mass of electric sparks, which crackled under the large drops of rain.

"We are too late," said the Doctor. "We must travel through a belt of fire with our balloon full of inflammable air!"

"To the ground! to the ground!" Kennedy kept replying.

"This risk of being struck by the lightning would be almost the same, and we should quickly be torn to pieces on the branches of the trees."

"Let us ascend, sir! Let us ascend!"

"Quick!—quicker still!"

In that part of Africa, during the equatorial storms, it is not an uncommon thing to count from thirty to thirty-five flashes of lightning in a minute. The heavens are literally on fire, and the peals of thunder incessant.

The wind broke out with frightful violence in that blazing atmosphere; it twisted and whirled about the fiery clouds; it sounded like the blast of some enormous ventilator, which forced the fires of heaven into such terrible activity.

Fergusson kept his furnace at its greatest heat, the balloon expanded and ascended; on his knees, in the centre of the car, Kennedy held down the curtains of the tent.

The balloon whirled round with rapidity enough to produce vertigo, and the travellers underwent the most frightful oscillations. Great cavities could be seen in the covering of the balloon, in which the

wind engulfed itself with tremendous violence. Hail of immense size, preceded by a tumultuous noise, tore through the atmosphere and rattled on the "Victoria." Still the balloon ascended—the lightnings flashing in flaming tangents from its circumference. It was in the very midst of fire!

"Heaven guard us!" cried the Doctor; "we are in its hands, and Heaven alone can save us. Be prepared for every event, even for catching fire; perhaps our fall may not be rapid."

The Doctor's voice with difficulty reached his companions' ears, but they could see his face unmoved amid the lightning, as it leapt about the netting of the balloon.

The balloon whirled about, and spun round and round, but still it mounted upwards. At the end of a quarter of an hour it had left behind it the zone of storm-clouds, and the electric disturbances and flashes now took place beneath it, like a vast crown of fireworks suspended from the car.

Thence, it was one of the most magnificent spectacles which Nature could exhibit to man. Below—the storm. Above—the starlit heavens, tranquil, silent, impassible, whence the moon threw her peaceful rays over the angry clouds.

The Doctor looked at the barometer; it showed an elevation of twelve thousand feet.

It was eleven o'clock at night.

"Thanks to Heaven!" said he, "all danger is passed; it will suffice to keep at this height."

"It was dreadful," said Kennedy.

"Not bad," said Joe; "it diversified the voyage, and I'm not sorry to have seen a storm up in the air. It's a pretty sight!"

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CHAPTER X.

The Mountains of the Moon.—A Sea of Verdure.—Cast Anchor.—Towed by an Elephant; its Death.—Field Cookery.—The Picnic.—A Night on Land.

AT six on the morning of Monday, the sun rose above the horizon; the clouds dispersed, and a pleasant wind refreshed the first hours of the morning. The earth, all perfumed, reappeared to the eyes of our travellers.

The balloon, turning in its position in the midst of opposing currents, had scarcely made any leeway—to use a nautical expression—and the Doctor, allowing the gas to contract, descended, in order to meet with a breeze in a more northern direction.

For a long time his attempts to find one were in vain; the wind bore him westward, even in sight of the celebrated Mountains of the Moon, which are ranged in a semi-circle round the top of Lake Tanganyika; their ridges, but little serrated, stood boldly out on the bluish horizon; it might have been called a natural fortification, impassable to the explorers of the centre of Africa; some isolated cones had their summits covered with eternal snows.

“Here we are,” said the Doctor, “in an unex-

plored country. Burton pushed well forward into the west, but he was never able to reach these mountains. He has even denied their existence, while Speke, his companion, affirms it; he pretends that they have birth only in the imagination of the latter; but for us, doubt is no longer possible."

"Are we going to cross over them?" asked Kennedy.

"Not at all, please heaven! I hope to find a favourable wind which will lead me to the equator. I will even wait, if it is necessary, and the 'Victoria' will cast anchor, like a ship detained by contrary winds."

The Doctor's prognostications were not long in being realised. After trying different altitudes, at last the "Victoria" bore off to the north-east at moderate speed.

"We are in a capital direction," said the Doctor, looking at the compass, "and scarcely two hundred feet from the ground, all happy circumstances in assisting us to explore these new regions. Speke, when he made the discovery of Lake Ukéréoué, went up northward farther east than we are—in fact, due north from Kazeh."

"Shall we be a long time going this way?"

"Perhaps. Our object is to reach a point by the side of the sources of the Nile, and we have more than six hundred miles to travel over, ere we reach the extreme limits attained by the explorers who have come from the north."

"And without ever touching the earth?" said Joe. "I am thinking of stretching my legs."

"And you shall, truly. We must also be careful of our provisions, and as we go along, Dick, my boy, you shall keep us supplied with fresh meat."

"As soon as you like, friend Samuel."

"We shall also have to renew our reserve of water; who knows but we may be blown out of our course into the arid desert? We cannot take too many precautions."

At mid-day the "Victoria" was in longitude $29^{\circ} 15'$, latitude $3^{\circ} 15'$. They had just passed over the village of Uyofu, the last northern part of Unyamwesi, by the side of Lake Ukéréoué, which, as yet, they could not see.

The natives who people the country closer to the equator seem to be more civilised, and are governed by absolute monarchs, whose despotic sway is unlimited. The most important of these forms the province of Karagwah.

Our three travellers agreed that they would "make land," as the sailors say, the first time they found a good place for the purpose. They were going to make a rather prolonged halt, and to submit the balloon to a careful examination.

The furnace was lowered, and the anchors thrown from the car began very soon to trail through the high grass of an immense prairie. At the height they had left it appeared covered with a close green turf, but in reality the grass grew seven or eight

feet high. The "Victoria" skimmed over, without bending a stalk of it, like some gigantic butterfly. Not an obstacle was to be seen; everywhere an ocean of verdure, without a single break.

"We may run a long time in this style," said Kennedy. "I don't see a tree anywhere to hook on to; my hunting seems knocked on the head."

"Wait a bit, Dick. You couldn't have any sport in that grass, which is higher than you are; we shall not be long finding a more favourable spot."

Such a mode of progress was charming, a veritable navigation over that sea of almost transparent green, which the breath of the wind rippled with graceful waves. The anchors, plunged in this lake of flowers, traced a furrow which closed behind them, like the sea in the wake of a vessel.

All at once the balloon experienced a violent shock; the anchor had doubtless caught some fissure of the rock hidden under this gigantic herbage.

"We are caught," said Joe.

"All right; then throw over the ladder," said the hunter.

Hardly had he spoken the words, when a shrill cry rang through the air, and the following exclamations broke from the lips of our travellers:—

"What's that?"

"What a strange cry!"

"We are off again!"

"The anchor has got free!"

"Not it; it is holding on still," said Joe, who was hauling at the rope.

"It is the rock that is moving!"

A great disturbance was taking place in the grass, and speedily a long and sinuous form rose above the verdure.

"A serpent!" cried Joe.

"A serpent!" cried Kennedy, seizing his rifle.

"No, no," said the Doctor, "it is the trunk of an elephant."

"An elephant, Samuel?" and Kennedy shouldered his rifle.

"Wait, Dick, wait!"

"Hold hard, the animal is towing us!"

"And the right way, Joe; the right way!"

The elephant got over the ground quickly, and soon got to a clearing, where he could be seen altogether. By his immense height the Doctor recognised him as a male of a magnificent species; his tusks were splendidly curved, pure white, and about eight feet long, and between them the flukes of the anchor were firmly fixed.

The animal vainly endeavoured to rid himself of the rope by which he was made fast to the car.

"Get along, old boy!" cried Joe, in great glee.

"Here's the newest thing out in travelling. No horses for us—an elephant's the ticket."

"But where is he leading us?" asked Kennedy, shaking his rifle, which he was itching to fire.



Towed by an Elephant.

"The very way we want to go, my dear Dick. Have a little patience."

"Go it, go it!" cried Joe.

The animal took to a rapid gallop, throwing his trunk right and left, and in his leaps giving the most violent shocks to the car, where the Doctor stood, axe in hand, ready to cut the rope if necessary.

"But," said he, "we won't lose our anchor till the last moment."

For an hour and a half the elephant kept on his way without appearing fatigued, for these enormous pachyderms can make long stretches, and from one day to another are found at considerable distances; much as whales are at sea, whom they match in size and rapidity.

"In fact," said Joe, "it is a whale we have harpooned, and we have only to imitate the manoeuvres of the whale-fishers."

But a change in the character of the ground compelled the Doctor to modify his style of locomotion. A thick wood of large trees appeared to the north of the prairie, about three miles off, and it therefore became necessary that the balloon should be separated from its conductor.

To Kennedy was entrusted the task of stopping the elephant in his course. He raised his rifle, but his position was not favourable for hitting the animal with success. A first ball, fired at its skull, flattened on it as if it had struck a sheet of iron,

without apparently inconveniencing the animal, but the noise of the discharge made him quicken his pace, which now was equal to that of a horse at a gallop.

"The devil!" muttered Kennedy.

"What a hard skull!" cried Joe.

"Let's see what a conical ball will do behind his shoulder," said Dick, and, reloading his rifle with care, he fired.

The animal uttered a terrible cry, but kept up his pace.

"Stop, sir," said Joe, catching up a double-barrel, "I must come to your assistance, or we will never see the end of this;" and two balls were lodged in the brute's flanks.

The elephant stopped and raised his trunk, then again at full speed took his course for the wood. His immense head began to hang down, and the blood to flow freely from his wounds.

"Let us keep up our fire, Mr. Dick."

"And a rapid fire, too," said the Doctor. "We are not much more than a hundred feet from the wood."

Ten shots more were heard; the elephant gave a frightful leap, the car and the balloon cracked as if everything was smashed, and the shock jerked the axe out of the Doctor's hands on to the ground.

The situation was now most perilous; the cable of the anchor, strongly fastened, could neither be detached nor cut through by the knives of the

travellers. The balloon was rapidly approaching the wood, when, at the moment, the brute raised its head, Dick, seizing the opportunity, sent a bullet into its eye. It stopped, hesitated, its knees began to give way, and its side was presented to the aim of the hunter.

"Here goes for your heart!" he cried, as he discharged his rifle for the last time.

The elephant uttered a roar of rage and agony, straightened himself again for an instant, turning his trunk from side to side, and then fell with all his weight on one of his tusks, which broke clean off. He was dead.

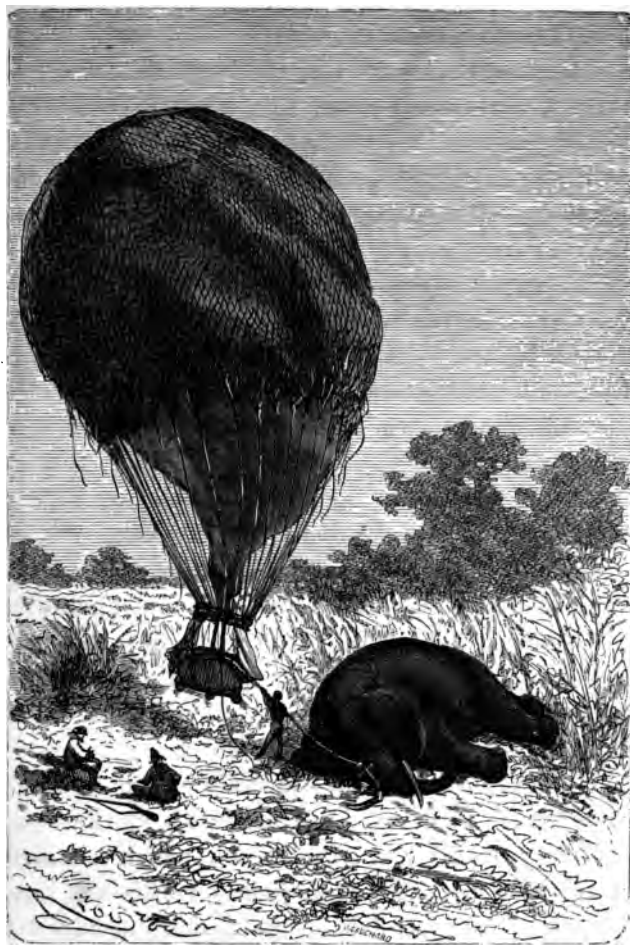
"His tusk is broken!" cried Kennedy; "ivory that would fetch five-and-twenty guineas a hundred-weight in England."

"What's the use of growling, my dear Dick? We are not ivory merchants, nor did we come here to make our fortunes."

Joe examined the anchor; it was yet firmly held by the tusk which had not been broken. The Doctor and Dick leaped to the ground, while the balloon, half inflated, floated over the body of the animal.

"What a magnificent beast!" cried Kennedy. "I never came across so large a one in India."

"There is nothing astonishing in that, my dear Dick; the elephants of Central Africa are the finest in the world. The Anderssons and Cummings have so hunted them near the Cape that they have



The Dead Elephant.

emigrated to the equator, where we shall doubtless find them in numerous herds."

"Meanwhile," said Joe, "I hope that we shall taste a bit of this fellow; I'll be bound I'll provide a very succulent dinner from him. If Mr. Kennedy will go shooting for an hour or two, and Mr. Samuel will inspect the 'Victoria,' I will during the time look after the cooking."

"A capital plan," said the Doctor. "Follow your humour, Joe."

"As for me, I shall avail myself of the two hours' liberty Joe has granted me."

"Off with you then; but be prudent, and don't go too far away."

"Make your mind easy." And Dick, armed with his double-barrel, plunged into the wood.

Joe looked after his particular share of the work. First of all he dug a hole in the ground about two feet deep; this he filled with the dry branches with which the ground was covered, and having filled it, he dragged a great log, two feet thick, on to the top, and set fire to the lot.

He next proceeded to the body of the elephant, which had fallen scarcely sixty feet from the wood, and very cleverly cut off the trunk, which measured nearly two feet thick at its junction with the head. Choosing the most delicate part of it, he added to that one of the broad and spongy feet of the animal, thus selecting the very best morsels, as he would have done the hump of a buffalo, the paw of a bear, or the head of a wild boar.

When the log of wood was completely consumed, the hole, cleared of ashes and charcoal, was excessively hot, and in this improvised oven he placed the pieces of elephant's flesh, carefully wrapped in aromatic leaves; he then covered the whole with the hot ashes, placed another log on the top of all, and when that was fairly burnt down, the meat was cooked to a turn.

Joe then withdrew the dinner from the oven, and placed the appetising meal upon some green leaves in the centre of an exquisite piece of greensward, brought biscuits, brandy, and coffee, and drew some cool and limpid water from a neighbouring brook. Joe was delighted with the appearance of the feast he had prepared, but he thought at the same time that there would be more pleasure in eating it.

"To travel without danger," said he to himself, "to have regular meals, and to live in a hammock, as I may say—I don't see what more there is to wish for. But I wish Mr. Kennedy would come."

The Doctor had employed the time in a thorough examination of the balloon, which did not appear to have sustained any damage from the storm; the taffeta and gutta-percha had stood it wonderfully. On taking the actual height of the ground, and calculating the buoyancy of the balloon, he saw with satisfaction that there was the same quantity of hydrogen. The covering remained perfectly impermeable.

It was only five days since our travellers quitted

Zanzibar. The pemmican had not yet been touched, the provisions of biscuit and meat would suffice for a long voyage; there was only the supply of water to renew. The pipes and the serpentine appeared to be perfect; thanks to the articulations of india-rubber, they had given with every oscillation of the balloon.

Having finished his examination, the Doctor occupied himself in putting his notes in order. He then made a very successful sketch of the surrounding country, with the prairie stretching out of sight, and the balloon floating over the body of the monstrous elephant.

At the end of two hours Kennedy returned with a string of fat partridges, and a sort of gemsbok, belonging to the fleetest of the antelopes of the African Continent, and Joe undertook the preparation of this increase of provisions.

"Dinner is ready!" cried Joe, presently, in his most persuasive tone.

Our three travellers had only to seat themselves on the lawn-like grass. The trunk and foot of the elephant were declared exquisite. They drank to Old England, as, indeed, they never failed to do; and for the first time in that charming country, the perfume of delicious havannas perfumed the air.

Kennedy ate, drank, and talked enough for four; he was intoxicated, and seriously proposed to the Doctor to establish themselves in the forest, to build a hut of boughs and leaves, and to commence

the dynasty of the African Robinson Crusoes! Nothing more came of it, however, except that Joe proposed to fill the part of Friday.

The country seemed so tranquil, so deserted, that the Doctor determined to pass the night on the earth.

Joe built up a circle of fire, an indispensable barricade against wild beasts—the hyenas, congars, and jackals, which, attracted by the smell of the elephant's flesh, prowled round the neighbourhood. Kennedy had to discharge his rifle several times amongst the boldest of these visitors; but at last the night passed without any incident to annoy them.

CHAPTER XI.

Karagwah.—Lake Ukéréoué.—A Night on an Island.—The Equator.
 —Crossing the Lake.—The Cascades.—View of the Country.—
 Source of the Nile.—The Island of Benga—Debono's Initials.—
 The English Flag.

N the morrow, as early as five o'clock, began the preparations for departure. Joe, with the axe which he had fortunately recovered, broke off the elephant's tusk, and the "Victoria," once more at liberty, bore the travellers towards the north-east at eighteen miles an hour.

The Doctor had carefully noted their position from the height of the stars on the previous night. They were $2^{\circ} 40'$ of latitude south of the equator, or 160 geographical miles.

They passed over numerous villages without paying any attention to the cries provoked by the apparition of the "Victoria;" they crossed the slopes of Rubemhé, scarcely less rugged than the summits of Ousagara; and, later on, met at Tenga the first spurs of the chain of Karagwah, which, according to the Doctor, was itself an offshoot from the Mountains of the Moon.

The old legend which made these mountains the cradle of the Nile was not far from the truth, since

they confine Lake Ukéréoué, the presumed reservoir of the waters of the great river.

From Kafuro, a large district much frequented by the country traders, the Doctor at last caught sight of this much sought for lake on the horizon, which Speke caught a glimpse of on the 3rd of August, 1858.

Fergusson was sensibly touched. He had almost reached one of the principal objects of his exploration, and with his glass to his eye he did not lose sight of one corner of that mysterious country.

What met his gaze?

Beneath him a land exhausted and impoverished, with but a few of the slopes of the ravines somewhat cultivated; here and there rising into cones of no great height, but becoming level as it neared the lake. The rice fields had given way to fields of barley; nothing else seemed cultivated but the plantain, from which is made a sort of coarse wine, and, growing wild, was the "mwani," which is used as coffee. Some fifty huts, half hidden under a thatch of flowers, constituted the capital of Karagwah.

They could easily see the wonder-struck faces of the inhabitants, who were by no means bad-looking, and with skins of a yellowish-brown. Women of incredible corpulence crawled about in the plantations, and the Doctor thoroughly astonished his companions by telling them that all this



embonpoint—highly valued—was produced by a compulsory regimen of curdled milk.

At noon the "Victoria" was in $1^{\circ} 45'$ south latitude; at one the wind drove her over the lake.

This lake has been named Nyanza* Victoria by Captain Speke. In this place it might measure ninety miles in breadth. At its southern extremity Speke found a group of islands, which he named the Archipelago of Bengal.

He continued his observations as far as Muanza, on the eastern side, where he was well received by the Sultan. He made a survey of that part of the lake, but he was unable to procure a boat, either to cross the lake or to visit the large island of Ukéréoué, which is very populous, and governed by three Sultans. It is a peninsula at low water.

The "Victoria" came over the lake at its northern extremity, to the Doctor's great regret, for he would have liked to determine the formation of its lower shores. The shores he saw bristled with thorny bushes and impassable brush, but were literally hidden by myriads of mosquitoes, of a clear brown colour, which rendered the country uninhabitable to man. Immense herds of hippopotami wallowed in the forests of reeds and sedges, or plunged into the whitened waters of the lake.

The lake itself, seen from on high, stretches away towards the western horizon like a sea, and so great is the distance between its shores that

* *Nyanza* signifies "lake."

communications have never been established between them, due, in some measure perhaps, to the fierce and frequent tempests of which its elevated and unsheltered basin renders it the scene.

The Doctor found some difficulty in guiding the balloon. He feared being borne eastwards, but he luckily lighted on a current which took him due north, and at six o'clock in the evening the "Victoria" was made fast to a little desert island, twenty miles from the coast, and in latitude $0^{\circ} 30'$, longitude $32^{\circ} 52'$.

Our travellers had managed to hook on to a tree, and the wind having gone down towards evening, they rested quietly at anchor. They dared not dream of landing, for here, as along the shores of the Nyanza, legions of mosquitoes covered the earth like a thick cloud. Joe, indeed, tried it, but he soon and quickly ascended, covered with stings, which, he said, did not trouble him, as he might have expected mosquitoes to know no better.

Nevertheless the Doctor let out as much rope as he could, in order to escape from these merciless insects, which kept rising now and again with a murmur that made them quite uncomfortable. The Doctor knew the height of the lake above the level of the sea to be 3,750 feet.

"Here we are on an island all to ourselves," said Joe, scratching himself hard enough to rasp his fingers off.

"Yes," said Kennedy, "and it is not so big that

we could not soon make the tour of it. I have not seen a living thing on it except these amiable insects."

"These islands with which the lake is dotted," said the Doctor, "are really submerged hills, and we should think ourselves lucky to have found shelter on one, for the shores are inhabited by ferocious savages. So go to sleep, we shall have a peaceful night."

"Are not you going to sleep also?"

"No! I could not close an eye; my thoughts drive away slumber. To-morrow, if the wind is favourable, we shall travel due north, and we will perhaps discover the source of the Nile—that secret which till now has remained impenetrable. So near the source of that great river I could not sleep."

Kennedy and Joe, whom scientific preoccupations did not in the least affect, were not long in falling soundly asleep, under the watchful care of the Doctor.

On Wednesday, the 23rd of April, the "Victoria" got under weigh at four o'clock in the morning, under a dull greyish sky; the night seemed to quit the waters of the lake with difficulty, and everything was enshrouded in a thick fog, but a strong breeze sprang up and quickly dissipated the mist. The "Victoria" balanced for some minutes in different directions, but at last took a course directly north.

The Doctor clapped his hands with joy.

"This is the right road!" he cried. "To-day or never we shall see the Nile! We are now crossing the equator and entering into another hemisphere."

"Ah! sir," said Joe, "you think then that we are crossing the equator?"

"At this very moment, my lad!"

"Then I think we ought to wet it, sir, without loss of time!"

"A glass of grog by all means!" cried the Doctor, laughing. "Your way of understanding cosmography, Joe, is by no means a bad one."

And this was how they celebrated "crossing the line" on board the "Victoria."

The balloon was making rapid way. On the west they could perceive the low and indented shore; at the bottom the elevated plateaux of Uganda and Usoga. The speed of the wind had become excessive—nearly thirty miles an hour. The waters of the Nyanza rapidly rose and rushed along in foaming billows, like the waves of the sea. By their height, and the distance between swell and swell, the Doctor was able to decide that the depth of the lake was exceedingly great. One or two boats, they just caught a glimpse of during their rapid voyage.

"This lake," said the Doctor, "is evidently, from its elevated position, the natural reservoir of the rivers of Eastern Africa. It gets back in rain all the water carried off by its effluents or by evapora-

tion. I feel certain that the Nile must take its rise here!"

"We shall soon see!" replied Kennedy.

About nine o'clock they neared the western shore, which appeared deserted and covered with dense woods. The wind then bore them a little to the eastward, and they could see the other shore of the lake, which bent in such a manner that it terminated in a wide and open angle, in $2^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude. Whilst managing the balloon the Doctor never ceased to examine the country with the most eager scrutiny.

"Look!" he cried, "look my friends! The stories of the Arabs were true! They spoke of a river by which Lake Ukéréoué discharged towards the north, and this river exists, we are descending it, and it flows with a rapidity as great as our own. Every drop of water that runs under our feet is rushing to meet the waters of the Mediterranean. It is the Nile!"

"It is the Nile!" cried Kennedy, catching the Doctor's enthusiasm.

"Long live the Nile!" cried Joe, who, for that matter, would have cried long live anything when he was in a good humour.

Enormous rocks here and there blocked up the course of this mysterious river. The waters foamed along, forming rapids and cataracts, which confirmed the Doctor in his previous belief. The surrounding mountains showed on all sides num-

berless torrents, flashing and foaming as they fell, —the eye counted them by hundreds. Everywhere from the earth sprang slender threads of scattering waters, crossing, mingling, emulating each other in speed, but all rushing into this new-born stream, which was to become a river after receiving them.

“Behold the Nile!” cried the Doctor, with an air of conviction. “Like the origin of its waters, its very name has perplexed the wise men since all time—they have derived it from the Greek, from the Coptic, from the Sanscrit; but what does all that matter, now that it has surrendered the secret of its source!” *

“But,” said Kennedy, “how can you be sure of the identity of this river with that which travellers from the North have explored?”

“We shall have proofs certain, unanswerable, infallible—if the wind will only last favourable for another hour.”

The mountains parted, giving place to numerous villages, to cultivated fields of sesame, of dourrah, and of sugar-canes.

The tribes of these plains showed themselves disturbed and hostile; anger and not adoration was the passion they displayed; they saw only the advent of strangers, not of gods. It seemed as if

* A Byzantine sage saw in “Neilos” an arithmetical name. N represented 50; E, 5; I, 10; L, 30; O, 70; S, 200: the whole amounting to the number of days in a year.

they felt that those who had traced up the Nile to its source had robbed them.

The "Victoria" had to be kept out of musket-shot.

"It won't be an easy matter to alight here," said the Scot.

"So much the worse for the natives," said Joe. "They'll lose the charm of our conversation."

"Come what may, I must descend," said the Doctor, "if it is only for a quarter of an hour; without doing so, I cannot verify the results of our exploration."

"Is it indispensable, then?"

"Indispensable; and descend we shall, if we have to fight for it."

"Suits me exactly," said Kennedy, patting his rifle.

"As soon as you like, sir," said Joe, getting ready for the fight.

"It will not be the first time," said the Doctor, "that scientific researches have been made sword in hand, so to speak. I recollect a similar thing happening in the mountains of Spain to a French *savant*, who went there to measure the terrestrial meridian."

"Take it easy, Samuel, and depend on your two body-guards."

"Are we there, sir?"

"Not yet; we must rise higher, too, in order to seize the exact configuration of the country."

The hydrogen expanded, and in less than ten minutes the "Victoria" had reached a height of 2,500 feet above the earth. Thence could be distinguished an inextricable network of streams which the river received into its bed, most of them coming from the west, flowing between numberless little hills and through a fertile country.

"We are not ninety miles from Gondokoro," said the Doctor, pointing to the map, "and less than five miles from the highest point reached by travellers from the north; let us descend with proper precaution."

The "Victoria" dropped down more than 2,000 feet.

"Now, friends, be ready for all chances."

"We are ready," replied Dick and Joe.

"All right."

Scarce one hundred feet from the ground, the "Victoria" floated along, following the course of the river.

At this place the Nile was three hundred feet across, and the natives were seen rushing about in the numerous villages which covered its banks. At the second degree it formed a fall ten feet in height, and consequently impassable.

"That is the cascade pointed out by Debono," cried the Doctor.

The river now widened considerably, and was covered with little islands, which the Doctor devoured with his eyes; he seemed to be looking



The last Cataract of the Nile.

for some sign which he expected to meet, but had not yet seen.

Some negroes had pushed off in a boat, which they kept afloat exactly under the balloon; Kennedy gave them a shot, which, though it did not reach them, sent them back to the shore in quick time.

"Pleasant voyage to you," cried Joe; "if I were you, I would not come back near the monster that darts lightning whenever he likes."

Suddenly, in great excitement, the Doctor seized his glass, and directed it at an island situated in the middle of the river.

"Four trees!" he cried; "look! down there!"

And sure enough, four isolated trees raised their heads at the end of it.

"It is the island of Bengal! It is really the island!" he added.

"What then?" asked Dick.

"We shall descend there, please heaven."

"But it seems to be inhabited, sir."

"Joe is right; if I do not deceive myself, I can see a gathering of about twenty natives."

"We must put them to flight—that won't be difficult," said the Doctor.

"Be it as you say," replied Dick.

The sun was in the zenith. The "Victoria" rapidly approached the island. The negroes, belonging to the tribe of Makado, uttered the most piercing cries. One of them waved his bark hat



L'Isola di Pangea

in the air; this was enough for Kennedy, who fired, and sent the hat flying in chips.

Then was a general rout. The natives dived into the river, and swam across; from both banks came a hail of bullets and a rain of arrows, but without endangering the balloon, whose anchor had caught in a fissure of the rock.

Joe glided to the ground.

"The ladder!" cried the Doctor. "Follow me, Kennedy."

"What are you going to do?"

"Come on, I want a witness."

"Here am I, then."

"Joe, keep a bright look-out."

"All right, sir; I'll answer for everything."

"Now then, Dick!" cried the Doctor, as soon as he landed.

He dragged his companion to a group of rocks which reared their heads at the end of the island; there he searched for some time, ferreting in the bushes till his hands were torn and covered with blood. On a sudden, he caught Dick's arm in a grasp like a vice.

"Look there!" he cried.

"Letters, by Jove!" said Kennedy.

And there, indeed, appeared on the face of the rock two clearly-cut letters. He read distinctly—

A. D.

"A. D.," replied the Doctor; "Andrea Debono!"

the very signature itself of the traveller who has farthest ascended the Nile!"

"There's no getting over it, friend Samuel."

"Are you now convinced?"

"It is the Nile; there can be no doubt about it."

The Doctor looked a last time at those precious initials, of which he took the exact shape and size

"And now," said he, "back to the balloon."

"Look sharp! some of these niggers are getting ready to cross the river!"

"That's of no importance; only let the wind keep fair for the north, in a few hours we will reach Gondokoro, and shake hands with our countrymen."

Ten minutes after, the "Victoria" rose majestically, and the excited and delighted Doctor, in token of his success, waved from the car the Union Jack of Old England.

CHAPTER XII.

The Nile.—The Trembling Mountain.—Arab Legends.—The Nyam-Nyams.—Joe's Reflections.—The "Victoria" progresses.—Aeronautical Ascensions.—Madame Blanchard.

" HICH way are we steering?" asked Dick, seeing his friend looking at the compass.

"Nor'-nor'-west."

"The devil—that is not north!"

"No, Dick; and I fear we shall scarcely be able to reach Gondokoro. I regret it; but as we have added the explorations of the east to those of the north we must not complain."

The "Victoria" was gradually leaving the Nile.

"One more look," cried the Doctor, "at that impassable latitude, which the most intrepid travellers have never been able to cross. There are, indeed, those intractable tribes mentioned by Petherick, Miani, and Lejean, to whom we are indebted for the best works on the Upper Nile."

"Then," asked Kennedy, "our discoveries agree with the presentiments of science?"

"Agree thoroughly. The sources of the White River, of the Bahr-el-Abiad, immerge into a lake as large as a sea. It is thence it derives its birth.

Poetry loses it there, no doubt ; it likes to suppose for this King of Rivers a celestial origin. The ancients called it by the name of Ocean, and were not far from believing that it flowed directly from the sun ! But we must repent, and accept from time to time what science teaches us about it. There may not perhaps always be wise men, but there will always be poets."

"I can see more cataracts," said Joe.

"These are the cataracts of Makedo, in the third degree of latitude. Nothing could be more exact ! Have we not been able for some hours to follow the course of the Nile ?"

"And below us, there," said Dick, "I can see the summit of a mountain !"

"It is Mount Logweg, the Shaking Mountain of the Arabs. All that country has been visited by Debono, who traversed it under the name of Latil Effendi. The neighbouring tribes of the Nile carry on a war of extermination against each other. You may easily guess what perils he had to encounter."

The wind now bore the "Victoria" towards the north-west, and in order to avoid Mount Logweg it was necessary to find a current with a different inclination.

"My friends," said the Doctor, addressing his two companions, "here truly commences our voyage across Africa. Hitherto we have only followed the traces of our predecessors. Henceforth

we launch into the Unknown. Will this shake your courage?"

"Never!" cried Dick and Joe in one voice.

"Let us start then, and may heaven protect us!"

At ten at night, after travelling over ravines,



forests, and scattered villages, our travellers arrived at the flanks of the Shaking Mountain, beside whose gentle slopes they pursued their way.

On that memorable day—the 23rd of April—they had, during fifteen hours, travelled with the help

of a strong wind, a distance of more than 315 miles. But this last part of the voyage had left a sad impression: a complete silence reigned in the car.

Was the Doctor absorbed in his discoveries? Did his two companions think of that passage through the midst of unknown regions?

Such thoughts were doubtless mingled with more vivid remembrances of England, and of distant friends. Joe alone showed a careless philosophy, taking everything for granted; but he respected the silence of his master and his friend.

At ten, then, the "Victoria" anchored by the side of the Shaking Mountain;* after a substantial repast they all slept successively under the guard of one of them.

On the morning, waking brought calmer thoughts. The weather was perfect, the wind blew in the right direction, and a good breakfast, rendered gay by Joe's good humour, put them in excellent spirits.

The country explored up to this moment is immense. It is confined between the Mountains of the Moon and those of Darfour—about the size of Europe.

"We shall doubtless cross what is supposed to be the kingdom of Usoga," said the Doctor. "Geographers have pretended that there exists in the centre of Africa a vast depression—an immense

* Tradition asserts that it trembles as soon as a Mussulman places his foot upon it.

central lake. We shall see if there is any appearance of truth in such a supposition."

"How did they come to have such an idea?"

"From the reports of the Arabs. These gentry are great story-tellers, too much so, perhaps. Some travellers arrived at Kazeh, on the Great Lakes, have seen slaves who have been brought from central countries, have interrogated them about their native place, have made into documents all the stories they had heard, and proceeded to deduce systems from them. There is always something true at the bottom, however, and you will see that we are not deceived as to the source of the Nile."

"I feel certain about that," said Kennedy.

"It is by means of the documents I have mentioned that attempts at maps have been made, but I intend to follow our route on one of them and rectify it with care."

"Is all that region inhabited?" asked Joe.

"Yes, and badly inhabited too!"

"I don't doubt it!"

"These scattered tribes are comprised under the general denomination of Nyam-Nyam; but this name is a case of onomatopœia, for it reproduces the sound of mastication."

"Perfectly," said Joe; "Nyam-Nyam!"

"Ah! Joe, if you were the immediate cause of that onomatopœia, you wouldn't find it so perfect!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"That these people are all considered cannibals."

"Is that certain?"

"Very certain indeed. It has also been said that the natives were provided with tails, like simple quadrupeds, but it is now known that these tails belonged to the skins of the beasts with which they are clothed."

"So much the worse; I should think they would find tails useful in driving away the mosquitoes."

"Very likely, Joe; but that story must be banished to the region of fable, like the one of some of the people having the heads of dogs."

"Heads of dogs! That would be very convenient for barking, and also if one was given to cannibalism."

"What is unfortunately true is the ferocity of these people; they are madly fond of human flesh, which they hunt for with the utmost avidity."

"I hope they won't put themselves out of the way on my account," said Joe.

"Let us hope not," said Dick.

"Excuse me, Mr. Dick, if ever I am to be eaten in a moment of scarcity I hope it will be for the benefit of you and my master. But to feed niggers! laugh!"

"All right, Joe, that's understood; we shall count on you when the time comes."

"At your service, gentlemen!"

"Joe talks in that way," said the Doctor, "that we may take care of him and fatten him up well."

"Perhaps," said Joe; "man is such an egotistical animal!"

In the afternoon the heavens were obscured by a hot mist caused by the sun, so thick that terrestrial objects could scarcely be discovered, and fearing to strike against some unforeseen peak, at five in the evening the Doctor gave the signal to stop.

The night passed without incident, but it had been necessary to watch with redoubled vigilance on account of the profound obscurity. The monsoon blew with extreme violence during the early morning of the next day, the wind engulfed itself in the lower cavities of the balloon, so as almost to loosen the part by which the pipes for expanding the gas entered, so that they had to be secured by ropes, a feat that Joe performed very cleverly. It proved at the same time that the orifice of the balloon had remained hermetically closed.

"This has a double importance for us," said the Doctor. "We avoid in the first place the loss of the precious gas, and in the next escape setting it on fire if it leaks."

"That would be a vexatious incident."

"Should we be precipitated to the earth?" asked Dick.

"Precipitated! No. The gas would burn quietly, and we would gradually descend. Such an accident did happen to a Mrs. Blanchard, who set fire to her balloon in letting off fireworks, and she did

not fall, and would not have been killed, I daresay, if her balloon had not struck against a chimney and pitched her out."

"Let's hope nothing of the kind will happen to us," said Dick. "I've seen nothing dangerous in our voyage hitherto, and I don't see what is to hinder us from arriving safely at the end of it."

"No more do I, my dear Dick; accidents, besides, are always caused by the imprudence of aeronauts, or by the faulty construction of their balloons. After all, out of thousands of balloon ascents there have not been twenty fatal accidents; as a rule, starting and coming to earth again are the most dangerous processes, so in such cases we should bear in mind to neglect no precautions."

"It is dinner hour, gentlemen," said Joe. "We must be content with preserved meat and coffee, until Mr. Kennedy can find means to regale us with a nice bit of venison."

CHAPTER XIII.

Fig-palms.—Mammoth Trees.—The War Tree.—A winged Team.—
Native Fights.—Massacres.—Supernatural Intervention.

THE wind became violent and irregular. The "Victoria" kept "tacking" in the air; blown sometimes to the north, sometimes to the south—a constant current could not be met with.

"We are doing a lot of travelling without getting on," said Kennedy, watching the frequent oscillations of the magnetic needle.

"We are not going less than thirty leagues an hour," said the Doctor. "Just look over and see how rapidly the ground disappears under our feet. Look! that forest appears as if it were about to precipitate itself on us."

"The forest has already become a clearing," said Dick.

"And the clearing a village," put in Joe, a minute later. "I can see the wonder-struck faces of the niggers."

"That is natural enough," said the Doctor. "The French peasants, when they first saw balloons, fired on them, thinking they were aerial monsters;

so there is nothing surprising in a native of Soudan opening his eyes rather widely at the sight of one."

"My faith," said Joe, as the "Victoria" passed over within a hundred feet of a little village, "if you will allow me, sir, I will throw down an empty bottle. If it lands safely they will make a god of it; and if it breaks they will turn each piece into a talisman."

So saying, he threw over a bottle, which was, of course, smashed into a thousand pieces, the natives darting into their huts and yelling with terror. A little farther on Kennedy cried out,—

"Look at that singular tree. It is one sort of tree below and another above!"

"A queer sort of country," said Joe; "where trees grow on the top of each other."

"It is simply the trunk of a fig tree," replied the Doctor, "on which there has been a little earth, and one fine day the wind has carried the seed of a palm tree there, where it has grown and flourished."

"A capital plan," said Joe, "which I shall import into England. It would do well in the London parks; without reckoning how it would increase the number of fruit trees, as every little market-gardener could grow as many as he liked, one on top of the other."

Whilst Joe was speaking, it had become necessary to ascend, in order to surmount a forest of

banian trees, which grew to a height of more than three hundred feet.

“What magnificent trees!” cried Kennedy. “There are few finer sights than those presented by these venerable forests. Don’t you think so, Samuel?”



“The height of these banian trees is certainly marvellous, my dear Dick; but it would not be thought at all surprising in the forests of the New World.”

“What! there are loftier trees than these?”

"Decidedly; amongst those called the Mammoth trees. In California a cedar has been met with which reached the height of four hundred and fifty feet—higher than the Victoria tower at the Houses of Parliament, or even the great Pyramid itself. It measured a hundred and twenty feet in circumference at its base; and the concentric rings of its wood showed it to be four thousand years old."

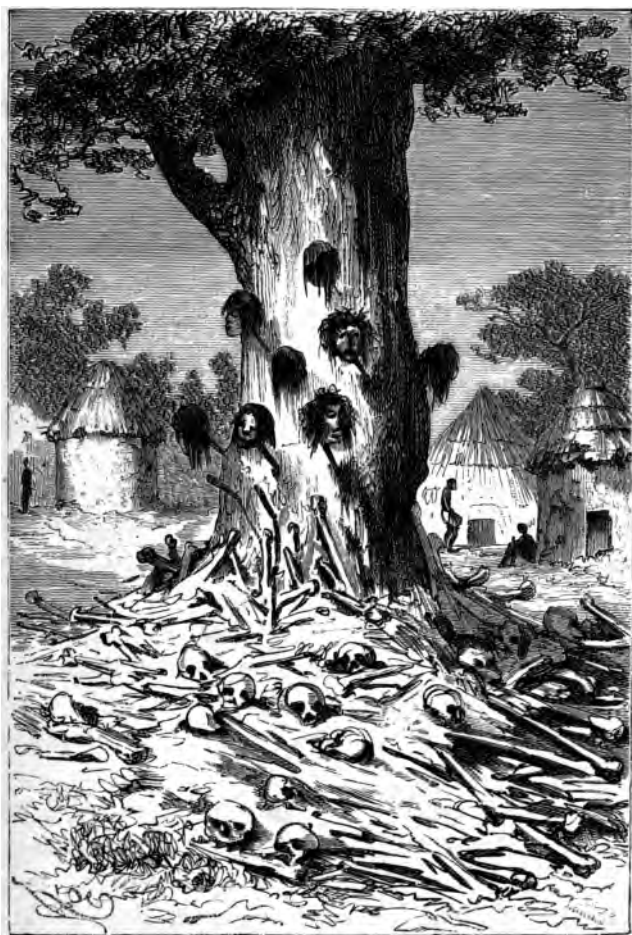
"That is not very surprising, sir. After living four thousand years, it would be hard if one did not grow rather tall."

But the forest was already passed, and under their feet a large number of huts appeared, built in a circle round an open space, in the centre of which grew a tree which was certainly unique. It was a gigantic sycamore, whose trunk was almost hidden under a heap of human bones; and in place of flowers, it bore a number of freshly-severed heads, held in their places by poignards driven into the bark.

"The war-tree of the cannibals," said the Doctor. "The North American Indian scalps his foe, the African cuts off his head."

"A matter of taste," said Joe.

The village and the tree with its gory heads had already disappeared, and another sight as repulsive was under their eyes; half-devoured bodies, skeletons falling into dust, and human limbs scattered on all sides—a feast for the hyenas and jackals.



The Cannibal's Tree.

"There are swarms of these birds all about the machine," said Joe, "and they are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise. They are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise."

"I am afraid," said the Doctor, "that the machine will be of little use here. The birds are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise. They are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise."

"Yes," said Dick, "the birds are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise. They are so noisy that they make it impossible to hear anything but their own noise."

"They are eagles," said Kennedy, "and have been looking at them with the glass. They are eagles, whose flight is as rapid as a bullet."

"Heaven protect us from their attacks!" Doctor. "They are more to be dreaded than beasts or savages."

"Why?" said Dick, "a shot or two will do them."

"I should prefer, my dear Dick, to let them alone. The silk of our machine will stand one blow of their beak, but the dangerous birds seem more than equal to our machine."

"No," said Joe, "and they

very plentiful nowadays. If we could only catch a team of live eagles, and fasten them to the car, they would pull us along famously."

"Such a thing has been seriously proposed," said the Doctor; "but I fear the animals would prove too restive."

"We should soon train them," said Joe. "Instead of bits we would drive them with blinkers, which would intercept their sight; so, with one eye uncovered, they would turn to the right or left; with both blinded, they would stop."

"Not bad, Joe; but I prefer a favourable wind to your team of eagles—it costs less to keep, and is a good deal more certain."

It was now mid-day. The "Victoria" had been for some time travelling at a more moderate pace, and the ground no longer flew past beneath them. Suddenly cries, hisses, and shouts reached the ears of the travellers, who leant over and saw, on the open plain below, an exciting spectacle. Two tribes had met in conflict and were fighting with fury, whilst arrows flew in clouds through the air. The combatants, eager to kill each other, had not observed the approach of the "Victoria." There were about three hundred of them mixed up in an inextricable mass, the greater number of them red with the blood of the wounded, in which they seemed to wallow,—altogether a hideous sight to behold. On the appearance of the balloon, there had been a momentary cessation; but now the



cries redoubled, and some arrows were shot at the car, one of which came so near that Joe caught it in his hand.

"Let us get out of range," cried the Doctor. "We must not be guilty of any imprudence."

The massacre continued, both sides using assa-gais and axes, and as soon as an enemy sank to earth his adversary instantly cut off his head; whilst the women mixed up in the struggle, collected together the bloody heads, and piled them up at each extremity of the battle-field, fighting amongst themselves for those hideous trophies.

"What a horrible scene!" said Kennedy, with profound disgust.

"They are murderous wretches," said Joe; "though, after all, they only require to be put in uniforms to be like regular soldiers."

"I have the greatest mind to interfere in their fight," said Dick, clutching his rifle.

"No, no!" cried the Doctor, quickly. "Why should we mix ourselves up in this quarrel? How do you know who is right or who is wrong, that you should play the part of Providence? Let us fly from this repulsive exhibition. If great generals could thus look down on the theatre of their exploits, they would perhaps end by losing their taste for bloodshed and conquest."

The chief of one of these savage tribes was remarkable for his athletic figure and Herculean

strength. With one hand he plunged his spear into the dense masses of his enemies, whilst wielding an axe in the other, with which he hewed them down. All at once he threw his assagai to a distance, threw himself on a wounded man, and at one blow cut off his arm, which he instantly carried to his mouth and began to tear with his teeth.

"Ah, the horrible beast!" cried Kennedy; "I can't stand this any longer." And the savage warrior, struck in the forehead by a bullet, fell dead.

His fall paralysed his warriors. His supernatural death, whilst it struck them with dismay, reanimated their enemies, and in a second the battle-field was deserted by half the combatants.

"Let us ascend and find a current that will take us away from this. I am heart-sick at the sight."

But they did not mount so swiftly as to prevent their seeing the victorious tribe throwing themselves on the dead and wounded, and quarrelling over the still warm flesh, which they greedily devoured. The "Victoria" rose; the cries of the maddened horde following her for a few minutes, till, at last, bearing away to the south, the scene of carnage and cannibalism was lost to view.

The ground had now become very rugged, with numerous watercourses, which flowed in an easterly direction, no doubt affluents of Lake Nu or the

river of Gazelles, of which M. Lejean has given such curious details. At night the "Victoria" anchored in longitude 27° and north latitude $4^{\circ} 2'$ after a voyage of 150 miles.

CHAPTER XIV.

Strange Noises.—A Night Attack.—Kennedy and Joe in the Tree.—
Two Shots.—Help ! help !—An Answer in French.—A Prisoner ;
how to save him.

THE night was excessively dark ; the Doctor had been unable to get a view of the country, and had anchored in a lofty tree, whose confused mass was scarcely visible in the darkness. As usual, he took the nine o'clock watch, and at midnight Dick relieved him.

"Watch sharply, Dick, keep an uncommonly bright look-out."

"Is there anything stirring?"

"No. Yet I fancy I have heard some vague noises beneath us. I don't know where the wind has brought us ; and we can't be too prudent."

"You have heard the cries of some wild beast or other."

"No ; it seemed to me quite different from that. At all events, rouse me at the least sign of danger."

"All right ! Be easy."

After listening attentively for a last time, and hearing nothing, the Doctor drew his rug over him, and was soon asleep.

The sky was covered with thick clouds, and there was not a breath of wind. The "Victoria," held by a single anchor, did not even oscillate.

Kennedy, leaning on his elbow, watched the furnace, and looked out now and then into the still darkness towards the horizon, where, like all restless watchers, he fancied he saw some glimmerings of light. At one moment he even fancied he saw a gleam of light at two hundred yards' distance; but, if he did, it vanished instantly. It was doubtless one of those sensations of light which the eye imagines in the profoundest darkness. Satisfied it was nothing, Kennedy had almost relapsed into contemplation, when a sharp hiss fell on his ear. Was it the cry of an animal?—or some night-bird?—or did it issue from human lips?

Knowing well the importance of the event, Kennedy was on the point of awaking his companion, but he said to himself that in any case, whether men or beasts, they were out of shot; so glancing at his arms to see they were within reach he seized the night-glass, and again sought to examine the darkness. He soon believed that he could make out beneath, some dim figures gliding towards the tree: by a moonbeam, which shed its light for a moment between the clouds, he distinctly recognised a number of people moving about in the shadow. He remembered the adventure with the dog-headed monkeys, and placed his hand on the Doctor's shoulder, who instantly awoke.

"Silence," said Kennedy. "Speak in a whisper."

"Is there anything stirring?"

"Yes. Waken Joe."

And as soon as Joe was awake, Kennedy told what he had seen.

"These confounded monkeys again," said Joe.

"It may be ; but we must be on guard."

"Joe and I," said Kennedy, "will get down into the tree by the ladder."

"And whilst you do," said the Doctor, "I will take steps to insure our speedy ascent."

"Agreed !"

"Let us get down," said Joe.

"Only use your arms in the last extremity," said the Doctor ; "it is useless to reveal our presence in these parts."

Dick and Joe replied by a sign ; they then slid down into the tree, and took up a position in the fork of two large branches where the anchor had caught. For some minutes they listened silent and immovable among the foliage. A sound of something rubbing along the bark was heard, and Joe caught the hand of the Scot.

"Do you hear?"

"Yes. Something approaches."

"If it is a serpent? The hiss which surprised you——"

"No ; there is something human about this."

"I would rather it was savages—these reptiles disgust me."

"The noise increases," whispered Kennedy, a minute or two afterwards.

"Yes, somebody is climbing up."

"Look out on this side, I will watch the other."

"All right."

They were on the top of an enormous branch, which grew right up from the heart of a great baobab tree; the darkness caused by the thick foliage was profound; and Joe, bending down to Kennedy's ear, pointed downwards, and whispered—

"Niggers!"

A few words, uttered in low tones, met their ears. Joe raised his gun to his shoulder.

"Make ready," said Kennedy.

The savages had really climbed the baobab; they swarmed on all sides, crawling along the branches like reptiles, clambering slowly but surely, their presence being now betrayed by the smell of the stinking grease with which they cover their bodies. Shortly, Dick and Joe caught sight of two heads on a level with the branch where they were.

"Steady," cried Kennedy. "Fire!"

The double report sounded like thunder, and was lost in cries of grief. In a moment all the horde had disappeared. But in the midst of the yells arose a cry—unexpected, impossible! A human voice had certainly uttered in French these words:—



A Double Shot.

"A moi! A moi!"

Kennedy and Joe, stupefied, regained the car like lightning.

"Did you hear?" said the Doctor to them.

"Undoubtedly! that supernatural cry—'A moi! A moi!'"

"A Frenchman in the hands of those savages!"

"A traveller!"

"A missionary, perhaps!"

"Unhappy man," cried Dick, "they are murdering him!"

The Doctor in vain sought to disguise his emotion.

"Not a doubt," said he, "an unfortunate Frenchman has fallen into the hands of these wretches. We will not start till we do all in our power to save him. The reports of our guns will have announced to him unlooked-for help—a providential intervention. We shall not falsify that last hope: is that your advice?"

"It is our advice, and we are ready to obey you."

"Let us put our heads together, and as soon as it is light be ready to carry him off."

"But how are we to scatter these wretched niggers?" asked Kennedy.

"It is clear to me," said the Doctor, "from the way they scampered away, that they are ignorant of fire-arms; we must, therefore, avail ourselves of their terror; but we must wait for daylight before

we can act, and we can then arrange our plans for saving the poor fellow when we can see the locality."

"This unfortunate man cannot be very far off," said Joe, "for——"

"A moi! A moi!" repeated the voice, in a yet feebler tone.

"The monsters!" cried Joe. "Should they kill him to-night!"

"Do you understand?" cried Dick, seizing the Doctor's hand. "If they should kill him to-night!"

"Not likely; these savages murder their prisoners in the light of day—they want the sun to see the deed."

"If I profit by the darkness," said the Scot, "and glide down to this poor fellow?"

"I'll go with you, Mr. Dick."

"Stop, stop—your proposal does honour to your hearts and to your courage; but you would only expose us all, and do no good to the man you desire to save."

"How so?" said Kennedy; "these savages are terrified and dispersed. They won't come back."

"Dick, I beg of you, obey me. If you should permit yourself to be surprised all would be lost—I act for the common good."

"But this unfortunate man who is waiting and hoping! Not to reply to him! No one to go to his assistance! He will think his senses have deceived him, and that he has heard nothing."

"We will reassure him," said the Doctor, and making a speaking trumpet of his hands, he called out in the language of the stranger—"Whoever you are, have confidence; three friends are watching over you."

A terrible howl answered him, drowning entirely the reply of the prisoner.

"They are murdering him!" cried Kennedy. "Our intervention will only serve to hasten the hour of torture. We must act."

"But how, Dick? What can you pretend to do in such utter darkness?"

"If it was only daylight," cried Joe.

"Well, if it was daylight?" asked the Doctor in a singular manner.

"Nothing simpler, Samuel. I would descend and scatter these blackguards with a shot or two."

"And you, Joe?"

"I should act more prudently, sir. I would arrange with the prisoner to run in the best way for us to save him."

"How could you tell him?"

"By means of the arrow I caught, to which we could fasten a note; or by shouting to him, for the niggers would not know what we said."

"Your plans are impracticable, my friends; it would be a most difficult thing for that poor wretch to be saved, even admitting that he eluded the vigilance of his executioners. As for you, Dick, by boldness and the terror struck by our fire-arms,

your project might succeed; but if it miscarried, you would be lost, and we should have two persons to save instead of one. No, we must look to all chances and act differently."

"Well, but act at once!" cried Dick.

"Perhaps!" said the Doctor in a singular tone.

"Can you then, sir, disperse this darkness?"

"Who knows, Joe?"

"Ah! if you could, sir, you would be the wisest man in the world."

The Doctor reflected.

His two companions watched him eagerly; they were both highly excited by the state of affairs.

At last the Doctor spoke.

"Here is my plan," said he. "We have 200 lbs. of ballast, for the sacks have never been touched. I admit that this prisoner, a man evidently crushed by sufferings, will weigh as much as one of us—we shall still have 60 lbs. to get rid of in order to ascend more rapidly."

"How do you intend to manage?" asked Dick.

"Look here, Dick; if I can get to the prisoner, and throw over as much ballast as can equal his weight, I don't change the equilibrium of the balloon; but then if I wish to obtain a rapid ascent to escape from this tribe of negroes, I must employ more energetic means than the furnace; but in throwing over that excess of ballast at a given moment I am sure to rise with extreme quickness."

"That is evident."

"Yes; but it has one inconvenience, which is, that to descend later I shall have to lose a quantity of gas proportional to the increase of ballast I shall have thrown out. Then this gas is very precious; but we must not regret the loss, when a man's life is in question."

"You are right, Samuel, we should sacrifice everything to save him."

"To work then—let these sacks be placed at the edge of the car, so that they can be thrown over in an instant."

"But this darkness?"

"Hides our preparations, and will not be dispelled till they are completed. See that all the arms are placed ready to hand, perhaps we shall have to fire; let me see, we have the rifle, one shot; the two double-barrels, four; the two revolvers, twelve; in all seventeen shots that can be fired in a quarter of a minute. But perhaps we shall not have recourse to fire-arms. Are you ready?"

"We are ready," answered Joe.

The sacks were properly placed, and the arms ready to hand.

"Good," said the Doctor; "keep your eyes about you. Joe is to throw out the ballast, and Dick to carry off the prisoner; but nothing is to be done till I give the order. Joe, go down and free the anchor, and come up quickly into the car."

Joe slid down the rope, and was back in a minute; the "Victoria," entirely free, floated in the air without moving.

During this time the Doctor convinced himself that there was enough gas in the mixing-case to last for some time, without using the Bunsen battery. He took the two perfectly isolated conducting wires, which were used in the decomposition of the water; then searching in his travelling-bag, he brought out two pieces of charcoal, cut to a point, and fastened them to the end of each wire.

His two friends looked on, without understanding what he was about, but they said nothing. When the Doctor had finished his work, he stood up in the centre of the car, took one of the pieces of charcoal in each hand, and approached their points.

Suddenly, an intense and dazzling light, unbearably brilliant, was produced between the two charcoal points, and an immense body of electric light absolutely shattered the darkness.

"Oh, master!" cried Joe.

"Not a word," said the Doctor.

CHAPTER XV.

A Flash of Light.—The Missionary.—Saved.—The Priest.—Little Hope.—The Doctor's Attention.—A Life of Abnegation.—Pass a Volcano.

 HE Doctor directed his powerful ray of light to different points, and stayed at last at a spot whence cries of terror proceeded, and to which his two companions cast eager looks.

The baobab, above which the "Victoria" floated, almost motionless, rose in the centre of a clearing; between fields of sesame and sugar-cane, a cluster of about fifty low and conical huts could be made out, around which swarmed a numerous tribe.

A hundred feet below the balloon rose a post. At the foot of this post lay a human creature, a young man of thirty at the most, with long black hair, half-naked, thin, and blood-stained, covered with wounds, and whose head was bent on to his breast.

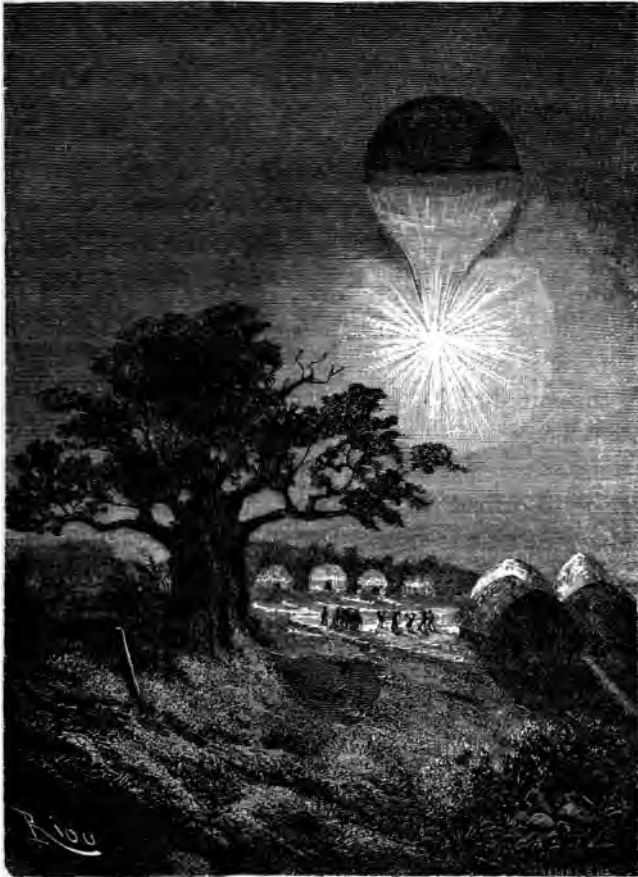
The half-effaced marks of the priestly tonsure were still visible on the top of his head.

"A missionary! a priest!" cried Joe.

"Unfortunate wretch!" said Dick.

"We will save him, Dick; we will save him!" exclaimed the Doctor.

The crowd of negroes, perceiving the balloon like an enormous comet with a fiery tail, were



The Electric Light.

struck with a terror easy to conceive. At their cries the prisoner raised his head. His eyes shone

with hope, and without quite understanding all that was passing, he extended his hands towards his unhopd-for saviours.

"He lives! he lives!" cried the Doctor. "Heaven be praised; these savages are plunged into terrible affright; we shall save him. You are ready, friends?"

"We are ready."

"Joe, extinguish the furnace."

The Doctor's order was executed. A breeze, scarcely perceptible, gently drove the "Victoria" towards the prisoner; at the same time it insensibly descended, owing to the contraction of the gas. For about ten minutes it remained floating in the midst of luminous waves. The Doctor cast over the crowd the brilliant light, almost blinding in its brightness; the tribe, under the influence of an indescribable fear, disappeared, one after another, into their huts, and solitude reigned round the post. The Doctor had not over-estimated the effect of the apparition of the "Victoria" casting the brilliancy of sunlight in that intense darkness.

The car neared the ground; and several of the bolder negroes, comprehending that their victim was about to escape, returned with loud cries. Kennedy took up his gun, but the Doctor ordered him not to fire.

The priest, on his knees, not having the strength to stand upright, was not even tied to the post; his weakness rendering such fastening unnecessary.

The instant the car touched the ground, Dick

threw his arm round the priest and lifted him into it; Joe, at the same instant, throwing out the two hundred pounds of ballast.

The Doctor anticipated ascending with extreme rapidity; but, contrary to his expectation, the



balloon, after rising three or four feet from the ground, became immovable.

“What holds us?” cried he, in accents of terror.

Some of the savages were running towards them, uttering ferocious yells.

"He is not," he said, "one of these
 common things, but a creature of the air."

"Look, look," said the Wizard, "the water tank!"

Look he said, comprehending his friend's desire,



and raising one of the tanks, weighing over a hundred pounds, he cast it over.

The "Victoria," thus suddenly disballasted, gave a bound into the air, three hundred feet high, amid the roaring of the tribe, from whom the prisoner escaped in a blaze of dazzling light.

"Hurrah!" cried the Doctor's two companions.

Again the balloon gave a bound, which carried it to the height of a thousand feet.

"What's the matter now?" exclaimed Kennedy, nearly losing his balance.

"Nothing; it is only that beggar below letting go," said the Doctor, quietly.

Joe, looking quickly over, could see the savage, with his arms extended, turning round and round in space, and soon after dashed on the earth. The Doctor separated the two electric wires. It was one in the morning.

The fainting Frenchman opened his eyes.

"You are saved!" said the Doctor to him.

"Saved," replied he in English, with a sad smile, "saved from a cruel death! I thank you, my brothers; but my days are numbered, even my hours, and I have but a short time to live."

And the missionary, exhausted, relapsed into his lethargy.

"He is dying," said Dick.

"No, no," replied the Doctor, "but he is very weak: let us lay him down under the tent."

He laid gently down on their rugs, this poor, starved body, covered with cicatrices and wounds yet bleeding, in which, in twenty places, steel and fire had left their frightful traces. The Doctor made some lint from a handkerchief, and laid it on the wounds, after washing them. These attentions

he rendered with all the skill of a physician, and then taking a cordial from his medicine chest, he poured a few drops on the lips of the priest.

The missionary with difficulty opened his lips to murmur, "Thanks, thanks."

The Doctor saw he ought to be left in perfect quiet, and so, drawing the curtains of the tent, went to see how the balloon was steering.

The balloon, in reckoning the weight of its new guest, had been lightened nearly a hundred and eighty pounds, so that it retained its elevation without the assistance of the furnace. At day-break a current impelled it towards the west-north-west. The Doctor stood looking at the priest in his slumber of exhaustion.

"Shall we be able to save this companion whom heaven has sent us?" asked Dick. "Is there any hope?"

"Yes, Dick, with care, in this pure air."

"How that man has suffered," said Joe. "He did a bolder feat than ours when he came alone amongst these savages."

"That's true," replied Kennedy.

All day the Doctor would not permit his sleep to be disturbed; it was a lethargic sleep interrupted by murmurs of pain, which disquieted the Doctor.

Towards evening the "Victoria" rested stationary in the midst of the darkness, and during the night, whilst Joe and Kennedy lay by the sick

man's side, the Doctor watched over the safety of all.

Next morning, the "Victoria" had hardly moved towards the west; the day proved to be clear and bright. The sick man seemed a little stronger, and lifting the curtains of the tent, he inspired with delight the fresh air of the morning.

"How do you feel?" asked the Doctor.

"Better, perhaps," he replied; "but you, my friends, I have as yet only seen you in a dream. I can scarcely account for what has taken place. Tell me who you are, that your names may not be forgotten in my last prayer."

"We are English travellers attempting to cross Africa in a balloon, and during our passage we have had the happiness to save you."

"Science has its heroes," said the missionary.

"But Religion has its martyrs," replied the Scot.

"You are a missionary?" asked the Doctor.

"I am a priest of the Lazarite Mission; Heaven sent you to me—may Heaven be praised for it! The sacrifice of my life was made. But you come from Europe. Tell me of Europe, of France! I have heard no news of them for five years."

"Five years alone among the savages!" cried Kennedy.

"There are souls to save," said the young priest; "ignorant and barbarous brethren, whom religion alone can instruct and civilise."

The Doctor, responding to the desire of the missionary, talked long to him of France.

He listened eagerly, and tears flowed from his eyes. The poor young man took in turn the hands of Kennedy and Joe in his own, which were burning with fever; but he managed to drink with pleasure a few cups of tea which the Doctor made for him. He was, indeed, strong enough to raise himself a little, and to smile on finding himself carried through the clear air.

"You are hardy travellers," said he, "and you will succeed in your bold enterprise. You will again behold your parents, your friends, your country; you——"

His weakness here overcame him, and he had again to lie down—a prostration which left him nearly dead in the Doctor's hands.

At last he could not contain his emotion; he felt his life was ebbing away. Were they indeed going to lose him whom they had saved from the torture?

Again the Doctor dressed the frightful wounds of the martyr, and sacrificed a great portion of his stock of water in bathing his burning limbs. He surrounded him with the most tender and intelligent attention. Little by little the patient came back again to consciousness, but not to life. The Doctor made out his history from his interrupted discourse.

"Speak your native language," said the Doctor; "I understand it, and it will fatigue you less."

The missionary was a poor young man, a native of Aradon, a village in Bretagne; his first instincts had led him to embrace an ecclesiastical career; to that life of abnegation he was desirous of adding a life of danger, and acted as one of the priests of the mission of which St. Vincent de Paul was the glorious founder. At twenty he left his country for the inhospitable shores of Africa. Thence, by degrees, overcoming obstacles, braving privations, walking and praying, he had advanced into the midst of the tribes who dwell by the waters of the Upper Nile. For two years his religion was repulsed, his zeal misunderstood, his charities taken in bad part; he was kept prisoner by one of the most cruel tribes of Nyambarra, the object of a thousand insults. But throughout all he taught, he instructed, he prayed. The tribe was broken up, and he was left for dead after one of those combats so frequent between these nations; but instead of retracing his steps, he continued his evangelical pilgrimage. He got on best when they took him for a mad-man; he became familiar with the idioms of these countries.

For another two years he wandered throughout these barbarous regions, strong in that superhuman strength which comes from on high; for a year he had resided with that tribe of the Nyam-Nyam, called the Barafri, which is one of the most savage. A few days before the chief had suddenly died, and the unexpected death was laid at his door, and

it was resolved to sacrifice him. For forty hours he had been subjected to the torture, and as the Doctor surmised, he was to have been killed at mid-day.

When he heard the noise of fire-arms he thought he was dreaming; but nature rallied for a little, and he had then called out, and heard, as if from heaven, the voice of consolation.

"I do not regret," added he, "the life I am about to lose. Blessed be heaven that I have been permitted to press a friendly hand, and hear the accents of my country once more."

The missionary waxed feebler; the day passed between hope and fear; Kennedy much moved, and Joe passing his hand across his eyes when he thought himself unnoticed.

The "Victoria" travelled slowly; the very wind seemed to treat its precious burden with gentleness.

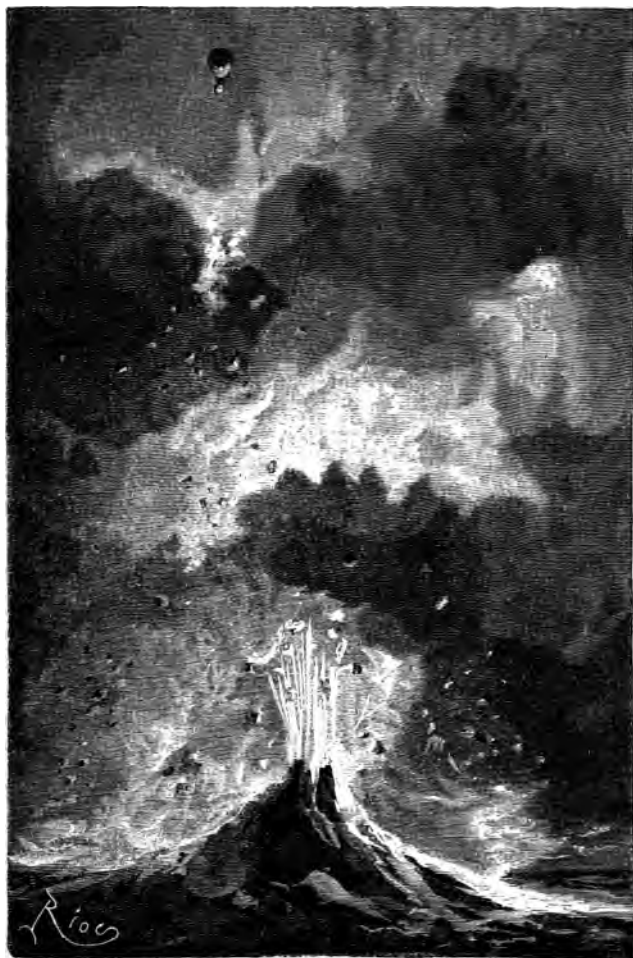
Towards evening Joe signalled a great light in the west; in higher latitudes it might have been taken for the aurora-borealis. The whole sky seemed on fire. The Doctor examined the phenomenon attentively.

"It is a volcano in full activity," said he.

"And the wind is bearing us right for it," said Dick.

"Never fear, we will cross it at a safe height."

Three hours after the "Victoria" was amongst great mountains, her exact position being longitude $24^{\circ} 15'$, latitude $4^{\circ} 42'$.



The Volcano.

Before them was a blazing crater pouring out torrents of melted lava, and casting up enormous blocks of stone to a great height, while on all sides streams of liquid fire fell in dazzling cascades : a magnificent, but a dangerous sight, for the wind steadily wafted the balloon towards that fiery atmosphere. This obstacle, which they could not avoid, had to be passed at a safe height, and the furnace was kept at full work ; the "Victoria" rose to an elevation of six thousand feet, leaving a clear distance of eighteen hundred feet between herself and the volcano.

From his sick couch, the dying priest could contemplate this fiery crater, from which issued, with loud noises, a thousand sheaves of flame. This overflow of waves of fire clothed the sides of the mountain with a perfect carpet of flames. The lower part of the balloon shone again in the night, a torrid heat reached even to the car, and the Doctor made haste to fly from such a perilous situation.

About ten at night the mountain had become a red speck on the horizon, and the "Victoria" peacefully pursued her way in a less elevated zone.

CHAPTER XVI.

Joe's Rage.—The Death of a Christian; the Burial.—Masses of Quartz.—Joe's Hallucinations.—Valuable Ballast.—Across the Golden Mountains.—Joe's Despair.



MAGNIFICENT night fell over the earth.

The priest peacefully slept the sleep of weakness and prostration.

"He will never get over it," said Joe, "poor young fellow; hardly thirty years old."

"He will die in our arms," said the Doctor; "his respiration, already feeble, is becoming still more so, and I can do nothing to save him!"

"The infamous beggars!" cried Joe, in a sudden burst of passion. "And to think that this worthy priest can yet excuse and pardon them."

"Heaven has made his last night on earth a beautiful one; he will suffer little more, and his death will be like a peaceful sleep."

The dying man muttered some words from time to time, his respiration became worse, and he asked for air. The curtains of the tent were withdrawn, and he breathed with delight the gentle breezes of that lovely night. The trembling light of the stars and the rays of the moon fell full upon him.

"My friends," said he, in a weak voice, "I am going; may Heaven conduct you safely to your destination, and repay you all your kindness to me."

"There is still hope," answered Kennedy. "This is only a passing weakness; you will not die. How could any one die on such a lovely night?"

"Death is here!" replied the missionary, "I know it. Let me look it in the face. Death, the commencement of eternity, is but the end of earthly cares. Place me on my knees, my brothers, I beseech you."

Kennedy raised him. It was affecting to see his powerless limbs bend beneath him.

"My God," cried the dying apostle, "my God, have pity on me!"

His face shone. Far from that earth of which he had never known the joys, bathed in the gentle light of the stars and moon, and on the road to that heaven to which he seemed raised as by miraculous assumption, he seemed to have already begun a new existence. His last action was one of blessing his newly-found friends, and he fell back into the arms of Kennedy, whose face was bathed in tears.

"Dead!" said the Doctor, bending over him; "dead!"

And with one accord the three friends knelt down and prayed in silence.

"To-morrow morning," said the Doctor, "we

will bury him in this land of Africa, which he has watered with his blood."

During the remainder of the night the body was watched by the Doctor, Dick, and Joe, by turns, and not a word broke the religious silence. Every eye was full of tears.

On the morrow the wind came from the south, and the "Victoria" travelled slowly above a vast plateau of mountains. They saw extinct craters and savage ravines, but not a drop of water on their desert crests; piled-up rocks and ghastly white pits of marl—all denoted an awful sterility.

Towards mid-day, in order to inter the body, the Doctor resolved to descend into a ravine in the midst of plutonic rocks of primitive formation. The surrounding mountains would shelter him, and allow him to bring the car to the ground, for there was no tree to which he could make fast.

But, as he had explained to Kennedy, in consequence of the loss of ballast since the taking up of the priest, he could only descend on the condition of losing a proportional quantity of gas. He therefore opened the valve of the exterior balloon; the hydrogen escaped, and the "Victoria" sank tranquilly into the ravine.

As soon as the car touched the earth, the Doctor closed the valve. Joe leaped to the ground, still keeping one hand on the edge of the car, and with the other collecting a number of stones, which very

soon replaced his weight; he could then employ both hands, and he very soon threw into the car five hundred pounds' weight of stones, and the Doctor and Kennedy could descend in their turn. The "Victoria" was stationary, her buoyancy being unable to raise her.

Besides, it was not necessary to have a great number of these stones, for those collected by Joe were very heavy, a fact which aroused the Doctor's attention. The ground was covered with quartz and porphyritic rocks.

"Here is a singular discovery," said the Doctor to himself.

Meanwhile, Kennedy and Joe had gone a few paces off to find a spot for the grave. The heat in the ravine was like that of a furnace, the mid-day sun pouring its burning rays directly down from above.

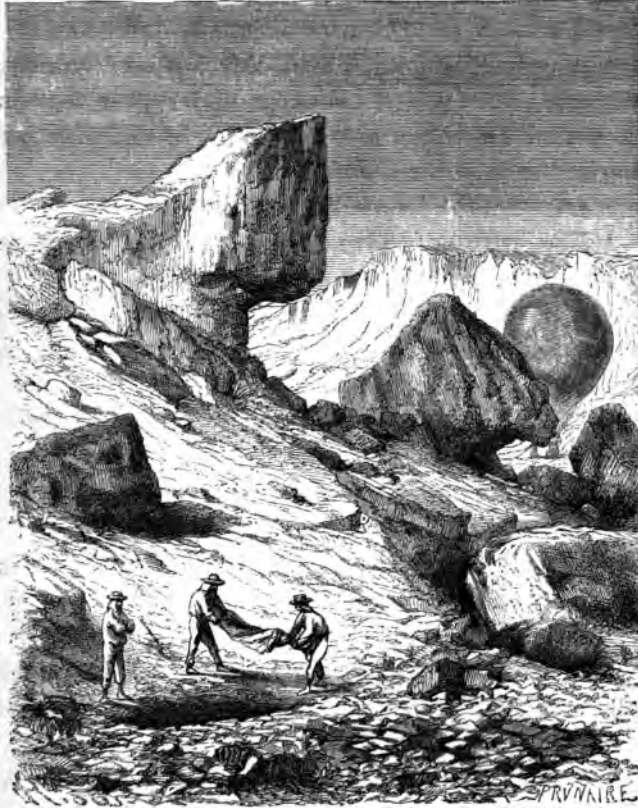
It was first necessary to clear the ground of the stones which encumbered it, in order to make a grave deep enough to protect the body from wild beasts. It was at last prepared, and the body of the martyr laid in it with respect.

The earth was again laid in over these mortal remains, and over all some large rocks were disposed so as to make a kind of tomb.

The Doctor remained motionless and lost in reflections; he did not attend to the appeal of his companions to look for a shelter from the heat of the day.

"Of what are you thinking?" asked Kennedy.

"Of a startling contrast of nature, of a singular



The Missionary's Burial.

effect of chance. Do you know in what earth that man of abnegation, that poor priest has been buried?"

"What do you mean, Samuel?" asked the Scot.

"This priest, who had taken the vows of poverty, now rests in a mine of gold!"

"A mine of gold!" cried Kennedy and Joe.

"A mine of gold," said the Doctor, quietly. "These rocks, which you kick under your feet as stones of no value, are really ore of the greatest purity."

"Impossible! impossible!" repeated Joe.

"You will not have to search long in these fissures of slaty schist to find valuable nuggets."

Joe threw himself like a madman upon the scattered fragments, and Kennedy was not long in imitating him.

"Calm yourself, my good Joe," said his master.

"Ah, sir, you take it easy."

"What! a philosopher of your temper——"

"Ah, sir, no philosopher can stand this."

"Let me see—reflect a bit; of what use to us is all this wealth? we can't carry it away."

"Not carry it away, indeed!"

"It is a little too heavy for our car. I hesitated about letting you share my discovery, for fear of exciting useless regrets."

"What!" said Joe, "abandon this treasure! A fortune for us! all for us! to leave it!"

"Take care, my lad! Have you caught the gold fever? Has not that dead man, whom you have just buried, taught you the vanity of human affairs?"

"That is very true," replied Joe; "but then the gold! You will help me, Mr. Kennedy, to collect a few of these millions?"

"What can we do with it, my poor Joe?" said the hunter, unable to restrain a smile. "We did not come here to seek our fortune, and we certainly cannot take it with us."

"Millions, too, are rather heavy," said the Doctor, "to carry in your pocket."

"After all," said Joe, driven to his last resource, "could we not, in place of sand, take this ore for ballast?"

"Well, I agree to that, but you must not make wry faces when it becomes necessary to throw a thousand millions or so overboard."

"Thousands of millions!" replied Joe, "can that all be gold?"

"Yes, indeed; it is a reservoir in which nature has heaped up her treasures for ages. There is enough there to enrich entire countries—an Australia and a California united, in the depths of a desert."

"And all that must remain useless?"

"Perhaps. In any case, see what I can do to console you."

"That will be difficult," said Joe, with a contrite look.

"Listen, then. I am going to take the exact situation of this place; I will give it to you, and when you reach England you can give part of it to

your fellow-countrymen, if you think it will make them happy."

"Ah, sir, I see very well that you are right; I resign myself, since there is no help for it. Let us fill our car with this precious ore. What is left at the end of the voyage will always be so much gained."

Joe set to the work with all his heart, and soon had a thousand pounds weight of quartz in the cradle, in which the gold lay in veins of the greatest hardness.

The Doctor looked on smilingly, and during Joe's progress took the situation of the missionary's tomb. It was in longitude $22^{\circ} 23'$, and north latitude $4^{\circ} 55'$.

Then throwing a last look at the mound that marked the last resting-place of the poor Frenchman, he retired to the car.

He would have liked to raise a modest cross over this grave, abandoned amid the deserts of Africa, but not a tree grew anywhere about.

A very serious consideration had just struck the Doctor. He would have given a great deal of that gold to find a little water; he would have liked to replace that thrown away when the negro was lifted up, but that was impossible in these arid wilds; this thought disquieted him. Obligated to feed his furnace constantly, he now began to run short for enough to drink, and he determined to seize the first opportunity to renew his supply.

On reaching the car, he found it encumbered with the stones collected by the greedy Joe. He got in without saying anything. Dick took his usual place, and Joe followed, not without casting a covetous look on the treasures of the ravine.

The Doctor lighted his furnace, and the gas expanded; but the balloon did not stir.

Joe watched him with uneasiness, but said not a word.

"Joe!" said the Doctor.

Joe did not reply.

"Joe, did you hear me?"

Joe made a sign that he heard, but did not want to understand.

"You are going to do me the pleasure of throwing a lot of that ore to the ground."

"But, sir, you allowed me——"

"I have allowed you to replace the ballast, that's all."

"Well, but——"

"Do you wish us, then, to remain eternally in this desert?"

Joe cast a despairing look to Kennedy, but that gentleman took no notice.

"Well, Joe!"

"Something the matter with your furnace," replied the obstinate donkey.

"My furnace is lighted, as you very plainly see, but the balloon will not rise till you throw out some ballast."

Joe scratched his head and took up a piece of quartz—the smallest of all—weighed it and re-weighed, threw it up and caught it again; it weighed about three or four pounds. At last he threw it out.

The "Victoria" did not move!

"Hallo!" cried he, "we don't yet stir."

"Not yet," said the Doctor. "Go on."

Kennedy laughed. Joe then threw out about a dozen pounds; the balloon was immovable. Joe grew pale.

"My good lad," said the Doctor, "Dick, you and I, weigh about four hundred pounds, so that you must get rid of a weight at least equal to ours."

"Four hundred pounds weight to throw away!" cried Joe, piteously.

"Go on; there is no help for it."

So Joe, heaving the deepest sighs, set to work to get rid of the ballast, every now and then stopping.

"There we go!" said he.

"Not a bit of it," was the invariable reply.

"Now we are off!" he cried.

"Go on heaving."

"It is rising; I am sure of it."

"Go on heaving," repeated Kennedy.

Then Joe, seizing a last block in despair, threw it out of the car; the "Victoria" rose a hundred feet, and, aided by the furnace, very soon cleared the surrounding peaks.

"Even now, Joe," said the Doctor, "you have a

very pretty little fortune left, and if you can only take care of it till the end of our voyage, you will be rich for the rest of your days."

Joe did not reply, but stretched himself on his couch of golden ore.

"Just see, my dear Dick," the Doctor went on, "the power of this metal over the best lad in the world. What greed, what passions, what crimes the knowledge of the existence of such a mine would produce! The thought is saddening."

At evening, the "Victoria" had travelled ninety miles to the west, and they were fourteen hundred miles, in a direct line, from Zanzibar.

CHAPTER XVII.

They Approach the Desert.—No Wind.—How much Water?—Equatorial Nights.—The Doctor uneasy.—How Matters stand.—Kennedy's Answer; and Joe's.—Another Night.

AHE "Victoria," anchored to a solitary and withered tree, passed the night in perfect tranquillity; the travellers were able to procure a little of the sleep of which they stood in need; the emotions of the preceding days had left sad recollections. Towards morning, the sky regained its brilliant clearness and its heat; the balloon rose in the air, and after some fruitless attempts, at last entered a current which bore it to the north-west.

"If I do not deceive myself," said the Doctor, "we have accomplished nearly half our voyage in ten days, but at the rate we are travelling it will take us months to end it. This is additionally annoying as we are threatened with wanting water."

"But we shall find some of it," replied Dick; "it is impossible that we shall not meet with some river, or brook, or lake, in this vast extent of country."

"I hope so."

"Do you think it is this load of Joe's that is preventing our getting on?"

Kennedy spoke thus to tease the bold Joe, all the more willingly that he had himself, for an instant, experienced the same kind of hallucination; but all was said laughingly and in good humour.

Joe cast a piteous glance at him. The Doctor, however, did not reply to him. He was thinking, not without secret terrors, of the vast solitudes of the Sahara; there caravans are weeks without meeting with a well, or being enabled to slake their thirst. He examined with the most careful glances the slightest depressions in the soil. These precautions, and the incidents of the last few days, had sensibly affected the spirits of the three travellers. They spoke less, and occupied themselves more with their own thoughts. Joe was no longer the same since he had feasted his eyes on that ocean of gold; he regarded with greedy looks those stones at the bottom of the car—worthless to-day—inestimable to-morrow. The appearance of this part of Africa was, besides, calculated to render one uneasy. They had entered on the desert. No more villages, not even a cluster of huts. Vegetation had shrivelled up. A few stunted plants, like those seen in the heathy districts of Scotland, grew here and there, with mastic trees and thorny bushes; beyond stretched a waste of white sand and flints.



The Beginning of the Desert.

In the midst of this sterility, the rudimentary foundations of the earth rose around in sharp and narrow ridges of the living rocks. These signs of aridity gave the Doctor food for thought. It did not seem as if a caravan had ever dared the passage of that desert country; it would have left some traces visible of an encampment—the whitened bones of the men or beasts who comprised it. But not a sign was to be seen, and one felt that soon an immensity of sand would reign supreme in that desert wilderness.

However, they were not the men to go back. Forward! was the word, and the Doctor asked no better. He had wished for a tempest to urge them beyond this frightful country. And not a cloud was to be seen!

At the end of that day, the “Victoria” had not covered thirty miles. If water had not failed them! But there were but three gallons left! The Doctor put on one side a gallon, destined to quench the burning thirst caused by a heat of ninety degrees. Two gallons then remained to feed the furnace, and they would only produce four hundred and eighty cubic feet of gas; but the furnace expended about nine cubic feet an hour, so that they could only travel for fifty-four hours: all this was mathematically exact.

“Fifty-four hours,” said he to his companions; “but as I have quite made up my mind not to travel at night for fear of missing a stream, a brook, or

pool, we have still three days and a half of travelling power, and during that time, water must be found at all risks. I have thought it best to explain how we stand to you, my friends, for I only reserve a single gallon for our thirst, and we must put ourselves on strict rations."

"Do you apportion the quantity," replied the hunter; "but it is not yet time to despair; we have three days before us, you say?"

"Yes, my dear Dick."

"Well, then, as our regrets won't do any good, in three days it will be time to talk about it. Till then, we must keep a brighter look out than ever."

At the evening meal, the water was strictly measured; there was more brandy in the grog, but that liquor had to be distrusted, as it was more likely to cause thirst than to refresh them.

The car rested that night on a plateau, which exhibited a very great depression. It was scarcely eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. This circumstance gave some hopes to the Doctor, who recalled the belief of geographers that a vast extent of water exists in the centre of Africa; but, if this lake existed, it had to be found. Meanwhile, not a change occurred in the burning sky. To the quiet night and its starry glory succeeded the changeless day of burning sun; his first beams ushered in the terrible heat.

At five in the morning the Doctor gave the signal of departure, and for a long time the

"Victoria" remained motionless in a leaden atmosphere. The Doctor could have escaped from this intense heat by rising to a greater height, but this involved the expending of a large quantity of water—a thing then impossible. He contented himself with keeping a hundred feet from the earth, where a light current wafted him towards the western horizon.

Breakfast consisted of some dried meat and pemmican. By mid-day the "Victoria" had hardly advanced a mile or two.

"We cannot go any quicker," said the Doctor; "we do not command—we can only obey."

"Ah! my dear Samuel," said Dick, "this is an occasion on which a propeller would not be despised."

"Doubtless, Dick, always supposing that no water would require to be expended in setting it in motion; for then the situation would be exactly the same; besides, nothing practicable has yet been invented. Balloons are just now in the same position as ships before steam: it took six thousand years to imagine the paddle and screw. We have therefore time to wait."

"This confounded heat!" said Joe, wiping his brow, running with perspiration.

"If we had water, this heat would do us some service, for it would expand the hydrogen in the balloon, and make a less flame necessary for the furnace. It is true, if we were not at the end of our

water we should not have to economise. Ah! cursed savage, who cost us that precious case!"

"You don't regret what you did, Samuel?"

"No, Dick, since we were able to save that unfortunate man from a horrible death; but the hundred pounds of water we had to throw away would be very useful to us just now. It would represent twelve or thirteen days more of our voyage, and would be sufficient to take us across this desert."

"We have made half the voyage at least," said Joe.

"As to distance, yes; as to duration, no, if the wind leaves us, and it seems to have a disposition to fail entirely."

"Well, sir," replied Joe, "it is of no use grieving; here we are, and it will not do to despair. We shall find water, I assure you!"

Mile upon mile the ground became more depressed; the undulations of auriferous mountains just showed above the plain, like the last projections of exhausted nature; a scanty herbage replaced the beautiful trees of the East; some patches of parched verdure still struggled against the encroachment of the sands; large rocks fallen from distant summits, broken to pieces in their fall, were scattered in sharp flints, which would soon be transformed to coarse sand, and then into impalpable dust.

"Here, then, is Africa, as you pictured it to

yourself, Joe! I was right when I said, have patience."

"Well, sir," replied Joe, "it is very natural, at least, the heat and the sand; it would be absurd to expect anything else in such a country. Look you," added he, laughing, "I don't believe in your forests and meadows; it would not be worth the trouble of coming so far only to find a country like England. Now, here, this is something like Africa!"

At evening the Doctor reckoned that the "Victoria" had not made twenty miles all that blazing day. A hot darkness covered everything as soon as the sun sank beneath the horizon, which seemed drawn with the accuracy of a straight line.

Next day was the 1st of May, a Thursday; but the days succeeded each other with a monotony without relief, each morning resembled the preceding one, mid-day poured down the same inexhaustible rays of burning sunshine, and night condensed in its shades that heat which the following day would again hand over to the following night. The wind, scarcely to be felt, was more like a last expiration than a breath, and the moment was known when even that would cease.

The Doctor fought against the feelings roused by the dreariness of the situation, with the calm exterior and coolness of a heart inured to it. Glass in hand, he examined every part of the horizon; he saw the last little hills insensibly decrease, and

the last vegetation disappear; before him stretched all the immensity of the desert. The responsibility which weighed on him affected him very much, although he did not show it. These two men, both friends of his, he had dragged from afar, almost by the strength of friendship and of duty.

Had he acted well? Was it not to try prohibited tracks? Had he not tried by this voyage to pass the limits of the impossible? Was not a knowledge of this mysterious continent reserved for ages yet to come? All these thoughts kept passing through his mind, till at last he brought logic and reason to bear on them.

After having stated all that he should not have done, he began to ask what it was necessary to do. Would it be impossible to retrace their steps? Were there no currents at a higher elevation which would bear them to countries less desert?

A portion of the country he had passed over, he knew not what lay before him, and he resolved to lay a clear statement of the position of affairs before his two companions. He clearly showed them how they were placed, what had been done, and what remained to do. It was just possible that they might be able to return; at all events, they could try to do so. What was their opinion?

"I have no opinion but my master's," said Joe. "What he will have to suffer I can suffer, and better than he. Where he goes I will go."

.. "And you, Kennedy?"

"I, my dear Samuel, I am not a man to give in : no one knew better than I did the perils of the enterprise ; but, since we fairly faced them, I determined not to see them. I am with you body and soul. In our present situation, my advice is that we should push on to the end ; besides, the dangers of returning appear to me to be too great to encounter. So now let us push ahead, since you can reckon on both of us !"

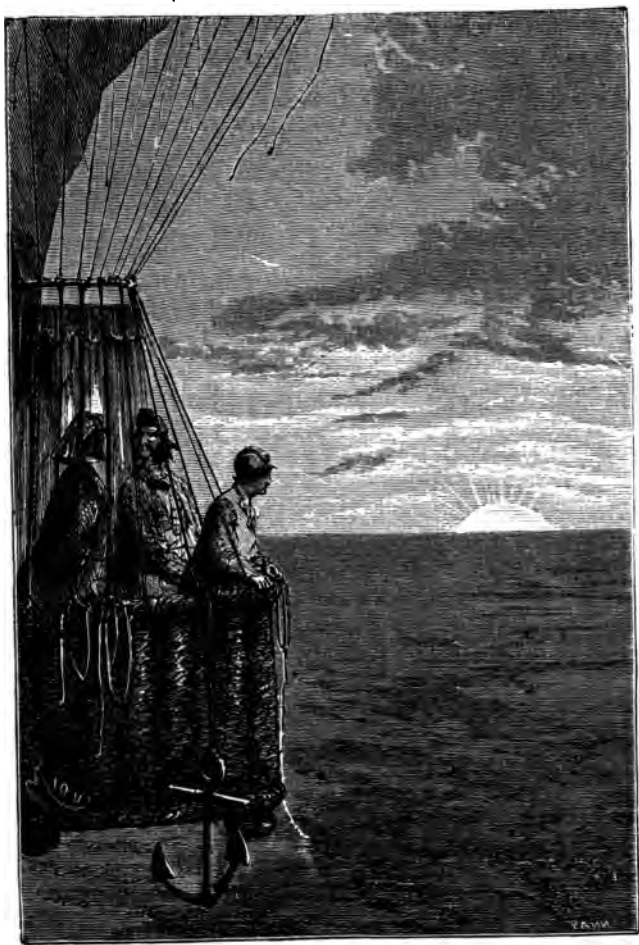
"Thanks, friends," said the Doctor, much moved. "I confess I expected such devotion, but I wanted to hear your cheerful and encouraging words;" and the Doctor shook both by the hand.

"Now listen to me," proceeded the Doctor. "After my ascents are over, we shall not be more than three hundred miles from the Gulf of Guinea. The desert does not stretch indefinitely, for the coast there is inhabited, I well know, to some distance inland. If it is necessary, we will direct our course towards this coast, and it is impossible that we shall not meet with some oasis or some wells where we can renew our supply of water ; but our great difficulty is the lack of wind, without that we can only rise to hover in mid-air without advancing."

"Let us wait with resignation," said Dick.

But though each strained his eyes in a fruitless search during that interminable day, nothing appeared which could give rise to a hope.

At last the sun sank ; his level rays lying like



A solemn Sunset.

horizontal lines of fire along the flat immensity. It was the desert!

Our travellers had only made a distance of fifteen miles since the day before, and had expended a hundred and thirty-five cubic feet of gas and two pints of water, which had been allowed to quench their burning thirst.

The night passed tranquilly—too tranquilly. The Doctor did not sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A little Philosophy.—A clouded Horizon.—In the midst of a Fog.—
The unexpected Balloon.—Signalling.—Likeness of the “Victoria.”—Palm Trees.—Traces of a Caravan.—Wells in the Desert.



EXT day brought the same cloudless sky, the same stillness—not a breath of wind!

After rising to a height of five hundred feet, the motion of the “Victoria” towards the west was scarcely perceptible.

“We are in the midst of the desert,” said the Doctor. “Look around at the immensity of sand! What a terrible sight! What a singular dispensation of nature! In the land we have left to the east an excess of vegetation, here a parched and sandy desert, and both in the same latitude and under the same beams of the sun.”

“The wherefore, my dear Samuel, does not give me any uneasiness, but very truly the fact does; and just now that is decidedly the more important.”

“It is not a bad plan to philosophise now and then, Dick; it can’t do any harm.”

“Philosophise! Nothing could be better. We have plenty of time for it, for we are scarcely moving; the wind has completely died away.”

"I don't think that will last," said Joe; "I can see a belt of clouds in the east."

"Joe is right," replied the Doctor.

"Good," said Kennedy. "Can we bring your cloud over here, with wind and rain enough to throw us on our faces?"

"We shall soon see, Dick—very soon!"

"This is Friday, sir; and I greatly distrust Fridays."

"Well, I hope that this very day you will have to recall your prediction."

"Do you dread the heat of the sun on the balloon?" asked Kennedy of the Doctor.

"No; the gutta-percha with which the silk is covered, will bear a much higher temperature; that in the interior has been exposed to the gas, heated sometimes as high as a hundred and fifty-eight degrees, and the balloon does not seem to have suffered."

"A cloud! a real cloud!" cried Joe, whose piercing eyes beat all glasses.

And, indeed, above the distant horizon a thick belt of clouds was slowly rising. It looked like a lot of little clouds heaped one upon the other, each keeping its shape distinct, whence the Doctor concluded that there was no wind in connection with their mass.

It was eight o'clock when these clouds first appeared, but it was eleven before they reached the sun, and hid her behind their dark curtain; at

the same moment, the lower edge of the clouds left the horizon, which appeared like a brilliant streak of light.

"This single cloud," said the Doctor, "will, I fear, be of no service to us. Look at it, Dick; it has not altered its shape since morning."

"I don't believe there is either wind or rain there—for us, at least."

"I fear not; it still keeps at too great a height."

"Well, then, Samuel, how would it do to go after this cloud which won't burst over us?"

"I am afraid that won't be of much use; we shall be put to a considerable expense of gas, and consequently of water. But in our position we must neglect nothing; we will ascend."

The Doctor applied himself to the furnace, and speedily the gas expanded and the balloon ascended. At fifteen hundred feet the cloud was met with, and the balloon entered a kind of thick fog, and was kept at that elevation; but there was not the slightest sign of wind, and the misty fog seemed to possess no humidity; objects thoroughly exposed to it were hardly even damp. The "Victoria," enveloped in this vapour, may have possibly travelled a little more quickly, but that was all.

The Doctor was mentioning with sadness the nearly useless results attained by their manoeuvre, when he heard Joe cry, in accents of the most lively surprise :—

"Oh, by Jove!"

"What is it, Joe?"

"Oh, sir, oh; Mr. Kennedy, here's a sight!"

"What is there?"

"We are not alone! Here are some interlopers who have stolen our invention!"

"Has he gone mad?" said Kennedy.

Joe looked like a statue of stupefaction; he stood quite still.

"Can the sun have deranged the brains of this poor fellow?" said the Doctor, turning round.

"What did you say to me?" he asked.

"Look there, sir!" cried Joe, pointing into space.

"By Saint Patrick!" cried Kennedy, in turn; "this is incredible. Samuel, Samuel, look here!"

"I see," said the Doctor, quietly.

"Another balloon! Other travellers than ourselves!"

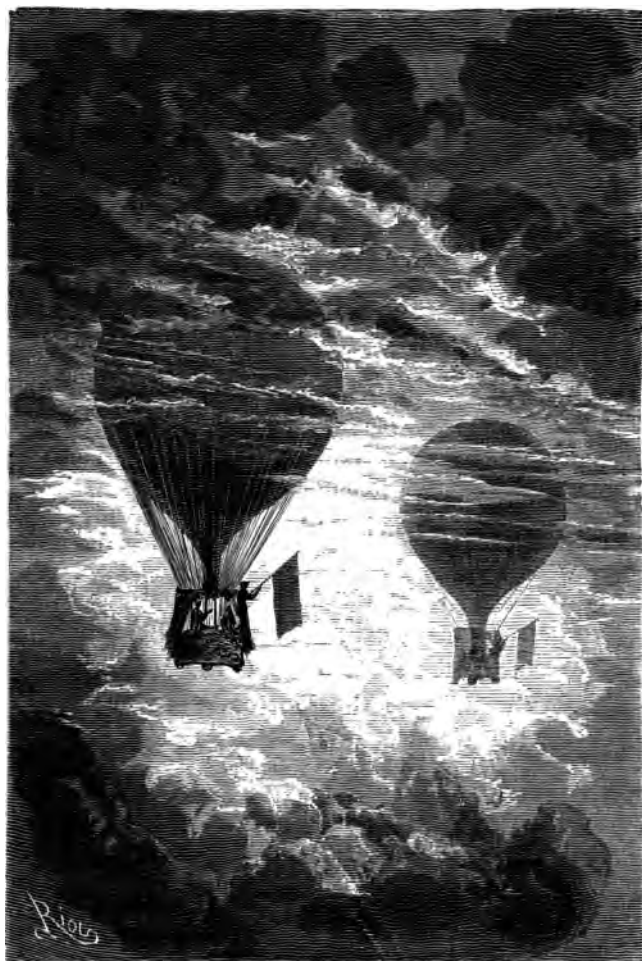
And there, two hundred feet off, a balloon floated in the air with its car, and its travellers, and followed exactly the same route as the "Victoria."

"Very well," said the Doctor; "we must make some signals to them. Take the flag, Kennedy, and let us show our colours."

"What does that matter?" asked Dick.

"They are monkeys," cried Joe; "they are imitating us!"

"It only means, my dear Dick," said the Doctor, laughing, "that you made the signal yourself, that it is we ourselves who are in that second car, and that that balloon is no other than our "Victoria."



An unexpected Companion.

"You'll never make me believe that, sir!"

"Get up on the edge of the car, Joe, and wave about your arms—you will see."

Joe obeyed, and found his gestures exactly and instantly reproduced.

"It is only the effect of a mirage," said the Doctor, "and nothing else; a simple optical phenomenon. It is due to the unequal rarefaction of strata of air, and that is all."

"'Tis marvellous!" said Joe, enlarging his experience of the mirage by a free use of his arms.

"What a strange sight!" said Dick. "I am delighted to see our brave 'Victoria!' She looks uncommonly well, and has a really majestic appearance."

"You have very well explained all this in your own way, sir; but it is a wonderful sight, all the same."

Gradually the image faded away; the clouds rose to a greater height, leaving the "Victoria," which did not attempt to follow them, and at the end of an hour they had quite disappeared. The wind, scarcely to be felt, became even fainter. In despair, the Doctor approached the earth.

The travellers, whom the incident of the mirage had startled from their preoccupied thoughts, relapsed into sad forebodings; their sufferings increased by the insupportable heat.

About four o'clock, Joe announced some object standing out in relief on the immense plateau of

sand, and soon after was able to state that two palm trees were at no great distance.

"Palm trees! Then there is a fountain! there are wells!" cried the Doctor.

He seized a glass, and assured himself that Joe's eyes had not deceived him.

"At last," he kept repeating, "Water! water! and we are saved! for if we do travel slowly, we are always advancing, and shall finish by getting there."

"Ah! sir, if one could take a drink at once: the air is suffocating."

"Drink, my lad."

Nobody asked better; a pint a piece was speedily swallowed, and that left them only three pints and a half.

"Ah, that's better," said Joe. "How good it is! I never drank beer that could come up to it."

"One of the advantages of privation," replied the Doctor.

"Not a bit," said Dick. "I never wish to find out the delights of a drink of water at the price of being deprived of it."

At six, the "Victoria" was over the palm trees. They were two skeleton trees, miserable, withered; two spectres of trees, without a leaf: more dead than living.

The Doctor contemplated them with terror.

Beneath lay the scattered stones of a well; but these stones, calcined by the rays of the tropical

sun, were falling into dust. No signs anywhere of water !

The Doctor's heart sank within him, and he was about to share his fears with his companions, when their exclamations attracted his attention. As far as the eye could reach westward, lay one long line of whitened bones ; remains of skeletons lay around the fountain. A caravan pushed through thus far, marking its track with the dying and the dead. The weakest had sunk one by one on the sand, the strongest had reached the brink of the long-sought-for well, only to find a horrible death. Our travellers grew pale at the sight.

"Do not let us descend," said Kennedy ; "let us get away from this hideous sight. There is not a drop of water to be got there."

"No, no, Dick ; we must have a clear conscience. It will do as well to pass the night here as elsewhere. We will search these wells to the bottom ; there has been a spring here, and perhaps we may be able to find something of it."

The "Victoria" grounded, and Kennedy and Joe put as much sand into the car as made up for the weight of the travellers. They ran to the well, and got into the interior by an old ladder, which crumbled into dust under them. The spring seemed to have been dried up for many years. They dug in the dry and friable sand—of all sands the most arid ; but no trace of water rewarded their efforts. The Doctor saw them ascend to the surface of the

desert, sweating, baffled, covered with the fine dust, beaten, discouraged, and given over to despair. He understood the uselessness of their search; he had expected it, and said nothing. He felt that to start at such a moment he would require the courage and energy for all three.

Joe picked up the fragments of a tough leathern bottle, and dashed them in his rage among the bones that everywhere strewed the ground.

During supper, not a word was spoken; they even ate with repugnance.

But after all, they had not yet in sad truth endured the torments of thirst, and should not have despaired for the future.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Doctor's Reflections.—A despairing Search.—The Furnace extinct.—The Desert.—A Night Walk.—Solitude.—A Break-down.—Joe's Projects.—A Day longer.

THE distance travelled by the "Victoria" the preceding day did not exceed ten miles, at a cost of a hundred and sixty-two cubic feet of gas. On Saturday morning the Doctor gave the signal for starting.

"The furnace can only be kept going six hours longer," said he. "If in six hours we find neither well nor spring, Heaven only knows what will become of us."

"There's very little wind this morning," said Joe, adding, as he saw how sad the remark made his master, "but no doubt it will get up presently."

Vain hope! It was a settled calm. One of those calms which, in tropical seas, hold vessels motionless in the "doldrums" for weeks. The heat became intolerable, and the thermometer, in the shade under the tent, stood at a hundred and thirteen degrees. Joe and Kennedy, stretched beside each other, sought, if not in sleep, at least in a kind of torpor, forgetfulness of the situation.

A compulsory inactivity made their leisure hard to bear.

That man is most to be pitied who cannot find an escape from his thoughts in work or occupation of some kind. But in this case there was nothing to do, no more to attempt; they could only submit to their fate without the power of bettering it. The sufferings of thirst began to make themselves cruelly felt. Brandy, far from assuaging this imperious need, on the contrary increased it, and well entitled it to the name of "tiger's milk," which the natives of Africa have given to it. There remained barely two pints of a warmish liquid; and though each one regarded with covetous eyes these precious drops, no one dared wet their lips with them. Two pints of water in the midst of the desert!

Again the Doctor, plunged in reflection, asked himself if he had acted with prudence? Had he not better have treasured the water he had decomposed in perfect loss to keep the balloon afloat? He had come some part of the road, certainly; but could he advance any farther on it? Sixty miles back, what would it have mattered if water had failed him? The wind, when it did rise, would have blown there as well as here, at least, if it came from the east. But hope urged the Doctor forward. And yet these two gallons of water, expended in vain, would have sufficed for a nine days' halt in the desert. And what changes might

not have happened in nine days! Perhaps, also, if the water had been preserved, he might have been able to ascend by throwing out ballast, even if he had to lose gas in order to descend again. But the gas of his balloon! It was its life-blood! It was its very life itself! A thousand such reflections filled his head, which he held in his hands for whole hours without raising it.

At ten in the morning the Doctor said to himself, "We must make a last effort. We must try, for the last time, to find a current which will bear us on. We must risk our last resources." And while his two companions slept he raised the hydrogen to a high temperature. The balloon filled under the expanded gas and rose straight under the perpendicular rays of the sun. The Doctor sought in vain for a breath of wind from a hundred feet high to five thousand—the spot he had left remained exactly beneath him; an absolute calm seemed to reign as far as the last limits of respirable air. At last the water for the gas was exhausted; the furnace fire went out; Bunsen's battery ceased to act, and the "Victoria," collapsing, sank gently to the sand, the cradle lighting again on the very marks it had implanted.

Mid-day. The observations of the Doctor made them out to be in longitude $19^{\circ} 35'$, latitude $6^{\circ} 51'$ —nearly five hundred miles from lake Tchad, and more than four hundred from the western coast of

Africa. On touching ground Dick and Joe came out of their heavy torpor.

"We are stopping," said the Scot.

"We must," replied the Doctor, solemnly.

His companions understood him. Having followed a constant depression of the ground, they had now reached a place where the ground was at the same level as the sea, and consequently the balloon was in exact equilibrium at the ground and remained immovable. The weight of the travellers was replaced by an equivalent one of sand, and they landed. Each was absorbed in his own thoughts, and for several hours not a word was uttered. Joe produced the supper of biscuit and pemmican, which was hardly touched, and a gulp of hot and disagreeable water completed the melancholy repast. That night no watch was kept; but no one slept. The heat was stifling. Next day there remained but half a pint of water, which was placed in reserve, and they resolved not to touch it but in the last extremity.

"I am suffocating," said Joe, shortly after. "The heat redoubles. Nor need that surprise one—one hundred and forty degrees."

"The sand burns as if it came out of a furnace," replied Dick, "and not a cloud in the sky; this will drive us mad."

"Do not let us despair," said the Doctor; "these frightful heats are invariably succeeded, in this latitude, by tempests, which come on with the



Night in the Desert.

rapidity of lightning. Notwithstanding the terrible serenity of the sky, an hour may produce a great change."

"Ah, when shall we see a sign of it?" said Kennedy.

"Look!" cried the Doctor, "the barometer already shows a slight inclination to fall."

"May heaven hear you! But, then, here we are fixed to the ground, and as powerless to rise as a bird with its wings broken."

"With this difference, my dear Dick, that our wings are intact and, I hope, will yet serve us well."

"Wind, wind!" cried Joe. "Wind that would take us to a stream or a well, and we should want for nothing. We have plenty of food and, with water, could wait a month without suffering. But thirst,—it is a cruel thing!"

Thirst, and also the incessant contemplation of the desert, tires the mind. There is not a dip in the ground, not a grain of sand, not a pebble to catch the eye. The terrible plain is heart-breaking, and brings on the illness called the desert sickness. The unvarying blue arch of the heavens, and the yellow immensity of the sand, end by frightening one. In that burning atmosphere the heat appears to vibrate, as over a burning fire; the spirit sinks in despair at the thought that there is no limit to the desert—like eternity in its immensity.

Unhappy wretches, deprived of water under that

torrid temperature, also begin to show symptoms of hallucination; their eyes stand out from their heads, and their sight becomes troubled. When night came the Doctor determined to conquer this uneasy feeling by a rapid walk. He resolved to walk about on that plain of sand for some hours; not to look for anything, but only to walk.

"Come along," said he to his companions; "believe me, it will do you good."

"Impossible," said Kennedy. "I could not go a step."

"I had much rather sleep," said Joe.

"But sleep or rest will be fatal to you, my friends. Fight against this torpor. Come along—come along!"

The Doctor could make nothing of them, and started alone through the star-lighted clearness of the night. His first steps were made with difficulty—the steps of a man weakened and unused to walking; but he knew well that the exercise would be beneficial. He had advanced several miles to the west, and already his spirit was cheered and strengthened, when suddenly he was seized with vertigo. He believed he had fallen into an abyss, he felt his knees give way, the vast solitude terrified him, he was a mathematical point, the centre of an infinite circumference—that is to say—nothing!

The "Victoria" had disappeared entirely in the shadow. The Doctor was attacked by an insur-

mountable fear—he, the fear-defying traveller! He wished to retrace his steps, but in vain; he called out, but not even an echo replied, and his voice was lost in space, like a stone thrown into a fathomless gulf. He fell fainting on the sand, in the midst of the awful silence of the desert!



At midnight he recovered consciousness in the arms of his faithful Joe, who, alarmed at the prolonged absence of his master, had followed his footsteps imprinted in the sand, and had found him in a swoon.

“What has been the matter with you, sir?” he asked.

"Nothing, Joe—a momentary weakness, that is all."

"It may be nothing, sir; but rise, lean upon me, and let us regain the 'Victoria.'"

The Doctor, taking Joe's arm, retraced his steps.

"It was imprudent of you, sir, to go so far away. You might have been robbed," he added, laughing. "But, sir, let us speak seriously."

"Say on—I listen to you."

"We must absolutely determine on some course: our present position can last but a day or two more, and if no wind springs up, we are lost."

The Doctor made no reply.

"Well, sir, some one must devote himself to the common good, and it is quite natural that it should be me!"

"What are you going to say? What is your project?"

"A very simple one, sir; I will take some provisions and walk straight before me till I reach some place or other, which I can't fail to do. Meanwhile, should heaven send you a favourable wind, you will not wait for me, but start at once. On the other hand, if I should come to a village, I shall explain my business by some Arabic words which you will write down for me, and I shall bring you help, or leave my skin there! What do you think of my plan, sir?"

"It is madness—but worthy of your brave heart, Joe. It is impossible. You shall not leave us."

"But, sir, something must be tried, and my plan could not harm you in any way, since, I repeat, you are not to wait for me; and very likely, too, I should succeed."

"No, no, Joe; we will not separate; that would be an additional grief. It was written that it was to be so, and possibly it was also written that it was to be otherwise afterwards: so, wait with resignation."

"So be it, sir; but I warn you of one thing, I give you a day—I shall not wait any longer. This is Sunday, or rather Monday, for it is one o'clock in the morning; if we don't start on Tuesday, I shall attempt the adventure—that is settled."

The Doctor made no answer, but, returning to the car, took his place beside Kennedy, who was lying in such perfect silence that it could scarce be sleep.

CHAPTER XX.

Frightful Heat.—Hallucinations.—The last drops of Water.—A Night of Despair.—Attempt at Suicide.—The Simoon.—The Oasis.—Lion and Lioness.

THE Doctor's first care in the morning was to look at the barometer; it had hardly fallen any appreciable distance.

"Nothing!" said he to himself. "Nothing!"

He left the car to look at the weather—the same heat—the same clear and implacable sky!

"Must we then despair?" cried he.

Joe said not a word; absorbed in his idea, and meditating on his project of exploration. Kennedy was very ill when he rose, and a prey to disquieting over-excitement. He suffered horribly from thirst; his swollen tongue and lips could with difficulty articulate a sound.

There were still a few drops of water left; every one knew it, every one thought of it, and was attracted by it; but no one dared make a step. These three companions, these three friends, looked at each other with haggard eyes, with a feeling of brutal greed, which betrayed itself most in Ke

nedy : his powerful organisation succumbed more quickly to these intolerable privations. All day long he was a prey to delirium ; he walked to and fro, uttering hoarse cries, biting his fingers as if ready to tear open his veins to drink the blood.

"Ah!" cried he, "Land of Thirst! you might have been well called the Land of Despair!" He then fell prostrate, and there could only be heard the faint sound of his breath as it issued from his parched lips.

When evening fell, Joe was in his turn attacked by delirium ; he imagined the vast desert of sand a vast lake of clear and sweet water, and more than once threw himself on the burning plain, attempting to drink, and rising with his mouth full of the fine dust.

"Curses on you," he cried, "this is salt water!"

Then, whilst the Doctor and Kennedy lay motionless, he was seized with an invincible desire to drain the little water left in reserve. The thought mastered him ; crawling on his knees he approached the car, his eyes brooding over the bottle, in which he could see the liquid, and casting a look on it which overcame all his power of resistance, he seized the bottle and carried it to his lips. At that instant the words—"Water! Water!" were uttered in an heart-breaking accent. It was Kennedy, who had crawled to his side ; he begged for it piteously, he knelt, he wept. Joe, weeping also, handed him the bottle, which he drained to

the last drop. Joe did not hear him ; like Kennedy, he had fallen back on the sand.

How that night of horror passed, none of them knew. On the morning of Tuesday the miserable men felt their very limbs drying up under the fierce rays of the sun. When Joe tried to rise he could not. He was unable to put his project in execution. He looked around him. In the car, the Doctor, utterly crushed, sat with his arms crossed on his chest, and his eyes fixed on some imaginary point in space with idiotic fixity: Kennedy was frightful, he rolled his head from side to side like a wild beast in a cage. Suddenly the hunter's eye caught sight of his rifle, the butt of which rested on the edge of the car.

"Ah!" cried he, rising by a superhuman exertion. He rushed to the weapon—distracted—mad—and placed the muzzle of it to his mouth.

"Stop! Stop!" cried Joe, throwing himself upon him.

"Let go! get off!" cried the Scot, his voice rattling horribly in his throat.

The two fought with desperation.

"Let go, or I'll kill you!" repeated Kennedy.

But Joe held on to him with all his strength, and they fought thus, without the Doctor appearing to see them, for nearly a minute. In the struggle the rifle suddenly went off: at the sound of the report, the Doctor rose to his feet like a spectre, and looked around him. In an instant his look became

animated; his arm was extended towards the horizon, and, with a voice which had nothing human in it, he cried—

“There! look there!”

So energetic was his action that Kennedy and Joe separated, and both looked where he pointed.

The plain resembled a sea driven to fury by a tempest; waves of sand rolled over and over each other in the midst of an enormous cloud of dust; an immense column approached from the south-east, turning round and round with extreme rapidity; the sun disappeared behind an opaque cloud, whose shadow he projected as far as the “Victoria;” the grains of sand came on as if liquid, and the rising sea rapidly approached them.

The bright light of hope shone in the Doctor’s eyes.

“The simoon!” he cried.

“The simoon!” repeated Joe, without understanding it.

“So much the better,” cried Kennedy, with all the rage of desperation. “We must die now!”

“So much the better,” replied the Doctor, “for, on the contrary, we shall live!”

And he began rapidly throwing out the sand that ballasted the car.

His companions understood him at last, joined him, and took their seats by his side.

“Now, Joe,” cried the Doctor, “out with fifty pounds of your ore.”

Joe did not now hesitate to do as he was bid.

The balloon rose.

"It was time," said the Doctor.

On came the simoon with the speed of lightning. A little more and the "Victoria" would have been crushed, torn to bits, annihilated. The enormous pillar of sand had reached it; it was covered with a perfect hail of sand.

"Over with the ballast, Joe!" cried the Doctor.

"There it goes," he replied, throwing over an enormous mass of quartz.

The "Victoria" rose rapidly higher than the sand storm, but, caught in that of the wind, was carried along with incalculable speed above the waves of flashing dust.

Neither the Doctor, Dick, nor Joe spoke; they could only look on, but they hoped, and were besides refreshed by the wind of this terrible hurricane.

At three the storm abated, then ceased; the sand, falling back, formed innumerable little sand-hills. The sky was again clear.

The "Victoria," having again become motionless, floated in view of an oasis—an island covered with green trees, and set like a gem in that ocean of sand.

"Water! there is water there!" cried the Doctor.

Immediately opening the upper valve, the hydro-

gen escaped, and the balloon grounded gently at two hundred paces from the oasis.

In four hours our travellers had made a voyage of two hundred and fifty miles. The car was soon ballasted, and Kennedy, followed by Joe, jumped to the ground.

"Your guns!" cried the Doctor; "your guns! and take care!"

Dick caught up his rifle; Joe seized a double-barrel. They quickly reached the trees and plunged into the fresh verdure, which promised them abundant springs, without noticing the large foot-prints, whose fresh traces everywhere marked the humid soil.

On a sudden a loud roar rang out, not twenty paces from them.

"The roar of a lion!" said Joe.

"All the better," said the exasperated hunter. "Have at him!"

"Gently, Mr. Dick, gently; on the life of one, depends the lives of all."

But Kennedy did not hear him; he advanced, his eye blazing, his rifle ready, terrible in his boldness.

Under a palm tree an enormous lion, with a long and thick black mane, stood ready to attack the new-comer. The instant the hunter came in sight he made his spring; but ere he lighted a ball pierced his heart—he fell dead.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Joe.

Kennedy rushed towards the wells, slipping over the moist tracks, and threw himself over a fresh spring, in which he eagerly moistened his lips. Joe followed his example, and nothing was to be heard but the lappings of tongues, as of animals slaking their thirst.

"Let us take care, Mr. Dick," cried Joe, drawing breath. "Do not let us make a bad use of this."

Dick, without replying, kept on drinking. He plunged his head and hands into the blessed water. He was as if intoxicated.

"But, Dr. Fergusson," said Joe.

The word recalled Kennedy to himself; he filled a bottle he had brought, and darted back over the tracks leading to the wells. But judge of his stupefaction! A body—opaque, enormous—closed the opening. Joe, who followed Dick, had to recoil with him.

"We are shut in!"

"Impossible! What can make you say——"

Dick did not finish. A terrible roar let him understand with what new enemy he had to deal.

"Another lion!" cried Joe.

"No, a lioness—ah! your cursed heart; wait a bit!" said he, quickly reloading his rifle.

An instant afterwards he fired, but the animal had disappeared.

"Forward!" cried he.

"No, Mr. Dick, no; you did not kill her that shot, her body would have rolled in here. She is



Noble Sport.

ready out there to spring upon the first of us who appears, and he will certainly be killed."

"What's to be done? We must get out; the Doctor is waiting for us."

"Attract the brute. Take my gun, and give me your rifle."

"What's your idea?"

"You shall see."

Joe, taking off his shirt, fastened it to the end of the weapon, and presented it as a bait above the opening. The furious beast darted upon it; Kennedy waited for her in the passage, and broke her shoulder with a ball; the lioness, roaring loudly, fell down the steps, upsetting Joe, who already seemed to feel her enormous claws, when a second report was heard, and the Doctor appeared at the opening, his smoking gun still in his hand. Joe quickly rose, jumped over the beast's body, and handed his master the bottle of water. To carry it to his lips and half empty it was for the Doctor the work of a moment. And the three travellers thanked Providence from the bottom of their hearts for their miraculous preservation.

CHAPTER XXI.

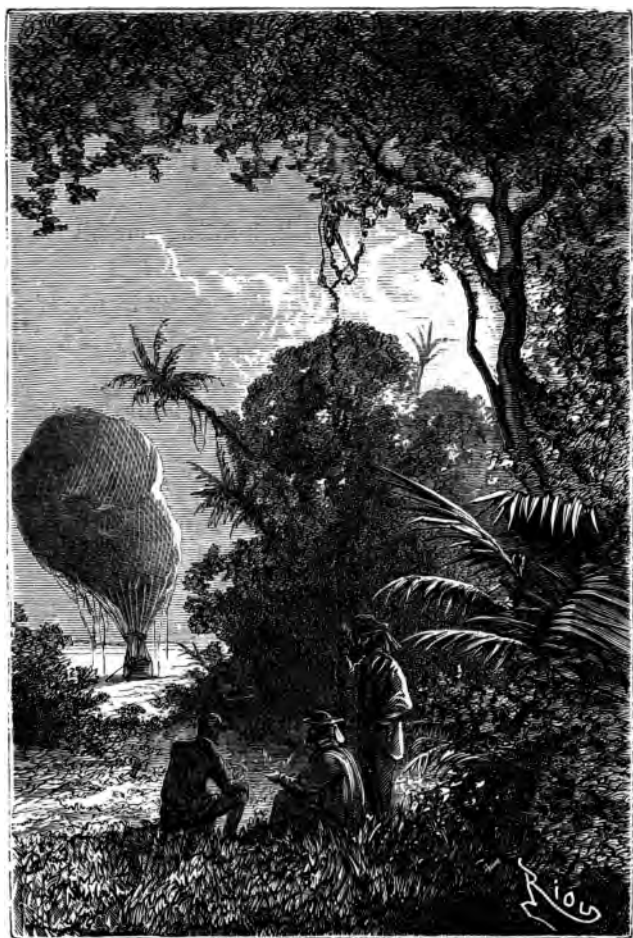
A delicious Evening.—Joe's Cookery.—On raw Flesh.—James Bruce.
—Bivouac.—Joe's Dreams.—The Barometer falls ; rises.—Preparations for a Start.—The Hurricane.

HE evening was charming, and was passed under the fresh shades of mimosas, after a cheerful repast, at which neither tea nor grog was forgotten.

Kennedy had thoroughly examined the little domain ; he had searched through every bush. Our travellers were the only living beings in this terrestrial paradise. Covering themselves up, they lay down, and passed a quiet and peaceable night, which brought them forgetfulness of all their past misfortunes.

Next day, the 7th of May, the sun shone in all her brightness, but her beams could not penetrate the dense shade of the foliage, and as there was plenty of provisions the Doctor resolved to wait in that place for a favourable wind.

Joe had brought his portable kitchen with him, and gave himself up to a lot of culinary combinations, in which he expended water with a careless prodigality.



A Delicious Evening.

"What a strange succession of pains and pleasures," cried Kennedy; "this abundance after such privation; this luxury succeeding to so much misery! Oh! I have been very near going mad."

"My dear Dick," said the Doctor to him, "if it had not been for Joe, you would not be here in a condition to discourse upon the instability of human affairs."

"Brave friend!" said Dick, holding out his hand to Joe.

"It was nothing at all," said Joe. "I only trust that you will never have an opportunity of doing the same for me."

"Poor human nature," said the Doctor, "to fight for so little!"

"For so little water, you should say, sir; and that is the most necessary thing in life!"

"True, Joe; and men deprived of food live much longer than those deprived of water."

"I believe it, sir; besides, we can eat anything we meet in case of need, even if it does not quite agree with us!"

"Savages are not often at a loss," said Kennedy.

"Yes; but there are savages who always eat raw flesh—a horrible custom!"

"The idea is so disgusting," said the Doctor, "that no one believed the accounts given by early travellers in Africa, who reported that there were people there who invariably ate raw flesh; in short, every one refused to admit that such could be fact."

It was under these circumstances that a singular adventure befell James Bruce."

"Please tell us the story, sir," said Joe, stretching himself luxuriously on the cool grass; "we have plenty of time to listen to it."

"Willingly. James Bruce was a countryman of yours, Dick, who travelled throughout Abyssinia during the years 1768 to 1772, and penetrated as far as Lake Tyana, searching for the source of the Nile. Returning to England, he published his travels in 1790. His accounts were received with perfect incredulity. The habits of the Abyssinians were so opposed to our own manners and customs, that no one would believe a word of Bruce's. Amongst other statements, Bruce had said that the natives of Eastern Africa ate raw flesh. This raised everybody against him. It was easy enough to say so, since no one had ever gone there to see! Bruce was both hot-tempered and courageous, and these doubts of the truth of his stories gave him great annoyance. One day, in Edinburgh, a gentleman present was making Bruce's statements a matter of jest; and referring to the story of the raw flesh, said it was neither possible nor true. Bruce said nothing, but went out, and came back a short time after with a raw steak, powdered over with salt and pepper in the African fashion. 'Sir,' said he, advancing to the gentleman who had been making fun of his travels, 'in doubting a fact which I have advanced, you have done me a serious

injury. In believing it impracticable you quite deceive yourself; and to prove this to every one present, you shall eat up that raw steak or give me satisfaction.' The gentleman was afraid, and, with many wry faces, ate the steak. With the utmost coolness, Bruce added: 'In admitting even that the thing is not true, sir, you can never, at least after this, say that it is impossible.'"

"Well said," cried Joe. "And if, on our return to England, any one casts a doubt on our voyage——"

"Well, what will you do, Joe?"

"Make him eat the pieces of the 'Victoria' without salt or pepper."

A hearty laugh followed Joe's intentions.

The day passed in agreeable repose; and with returning strength came back hope, and with hope courage and boldness.

Joe would never have wished to leave the enchanted spot—it was the very kingdom he had pictured in his dreams—he felt quite at home, and got from the Doctor the exact position of the oasis, which he entered in his note-book with the utmost gravity: longitude $15^{\circ} 43'$, latitude $8^{\circ} 32'$.

Kennedy had but one regret—that there was nothing to shoot in that miniature forest. To suit him, the place wanted some wild beasts.

"You have a short memory, Dick. Were there not a lion and a lioness?"

"Bah!" cried he, with the disdain of your real

hunter for the spoils of the chase after they are got. "In fact, the only thing about the matter is that, their presence here would lead us to believe that we are not far from fertile districts."

"Slender proof, Dick. These animals, when pressed by hunger or thirst, will travel very considerable distances. During the coming night we must watch with more vigilance than ever, and light fires as well."

"At this temperature, sir?" said Joe. "Still, since you say so, it shall be done, pity as it is to burn this wood, which has been so useful to us."

"We must be very careful not to set the wood on fire. Think of other travellers, who may one day find this refuge in the midst of the desert."

"I shall take care, sir. But do you think that this oasis is known?"

"Certainly, it is a halting-place for the caravans which frequent the interior of Africa; and you might not find a visit from one of them very pleasant."

"Are there any more of these frightful Nyam-Nyams here, sir?"

"No doubt. That is the name of the whole population—of all the tribes; and, in the same description of climate, their customs are very likely to be similar."

Turning this over in his mind, Joe made up his fires of pieces of wood broken up as small as pos-

sible. The precautions were fortunately unneeded, and each in his turn slept soundly.

The fine weather lasted all next day, not a breath of wind could be felt, and the balloon remained motionless, without even oscillating.

The Doctor began to feel uneasy again. If their voyage was to be thus prolonged, their supply of provisions would give out. Were they, then, to die of hunger, after nearly succumbing to lack of water?

A glance at the barometer reassured him, it was sensibly falling, there were evident signs of an approaching change in the atmosphere, and he determined to begin his preparations for a start on the first opportunity. The two water-cases, for making the gas and for drinking, were filled; the balance of the balloon was readjusted; and Joe had to throw out a notable portion of his precious ore.

With the return of health, Joe's ambitious ideas had again taken possession of him, and he made a good many wry faces before obeying the Doctor, who had at last to tell him plainly he could not carry such a weight, and that the choice lay between water or gold. That settled the matter, and Joe's nuggets were thrown on the sand.

"There they lie for some one who will come here after we have gone, and who will be rather astonished to find their fortune in such a place."

"What a joke if some scientific traveller were to fall in with these specimens!" said Dick.

"It would surprise him, no doubt, and he would write several folios on the subject. We should then hear of the marvellous discovery of auriferous quartz in the midst of the sands of Africa."

"And Joe would have been the cause of it!"

The idea of such a mystification delighted Joe, and helped to console him for his loss.

Vainly all day did the Doctor wait for a change in the weather. The temperature rose, and even under the shady foliage of the oasis the heat was insupportable: the thermometer stood at 149° in the sun. This was the greatest heat they had yet experienced.

Joe arranged the bivouac, as on the previous night, and during the Doctor's and Kennedy's watches nothing occurred; but about three in the morning, Joe being on the look-out, the temperature suddenly fell, clouds covered the sky, and the darkness increased.

"Up, gentlemen!" cried Joe, waking his two companions. "Here comes the wind!"

"At last!" cried the Doctor. But, on looking round, he exclaimed: "It is a tempest! To the 'Victoria!'—to the 'Victoria!'"

It was time to get there!

The "Victoria" bent before the violence of the hurricane, and was dragging the car along the sand. Had any of the ballast been by any chance thrown out, the balloon would have been off, and all possibility of ever seeing it again for ever lost.

But Joe, running at the top of his speed, caught the car, and held on to it, whilst the balloon was prostrate along the sand, in great danger of being torn to pieces.

All got in, the Doctor set the furnace going, and Joe threw out the excess of ballast. The travellers



cast a last look at their pleasant resting-place, where the trees were bending beneath the tempest; and catching the east wind, at a height of two hundred feet, disappeared in the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XXII.

Signs of Vegetation.—A Fantastic Idea.—Magnificent Country.—The Kingdom of Adamova.—Burton and Speke's Explorations joined to those of Barth.—The Atlantika Mountains.—The River Benoué.—Town of Yola.—Bagélé.—Mount Mendif.

FROM the moment of their departure our travellers were carried along with immense rapidity. It seemed as if they hastened to quit these deserts which had been so nearly fatal to them. About nine in the morning some signs of vegetation were caught sight of—a few blades of grass floating on that sea of sand, announcing to them, as to Christopher Columbus, the proximity of land, showed their green points between the scattered masses of flints, which formed, as it were, the rocks of that sandy sea. Through the haze the outlines of some hillocks could be seen on the horizon; but the monotony of the desert was disappearing. The Doctor hailed this new country with joy, and, like a sailor on the look-out, could scarcely help shouting—"Land ho!"

An hour later the continent displayed itself beneath their eyes, still rugged and savage, but less flat and bare, for here and there a few dwarfed trees showed themselves.

"We are at last in a civilised country?" asked Dick.

"Civilised, Mr. Dick! There's not an inhabitant to be seen."

"It will not be long before we do, at the rate we travel," observed the Doctor.

"Are we still in the country of niggers, sir?" asked Joe.

"Still, Joe; but shortly we shall come to the country of the Arabs."

"Arabs, sir; real Arabs with their camels?"

"No; no camels. These animals are very scarce, indeed almost unknown in these countries. You must go farther north to find them."

"That's annoying."

"Why, Joe?"

"Because if the wind was contrary we could make some use of them."

"How?"

"Only an idea I had, sir; that we might fasten them to the car and make them tow us along. What do you think of it?"

"My poor Joe, somebody else has had that idea before you; a French author, who—in a novel, it is true—makes some travellers in a balloon be towed by camels; but a lion makes his appearance, devours the camels, swallows the towing line, and hauls along in their stead,—and a lot more of it."

Joe, a little humiliated to find his idea had been used, as also his former idea about the eagles,

tried to think of an animal that could devour the lion, but not able to do so, took to examining the country.

A lake of no great extent now spread beneath them, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills too small to deserve the name of mountains, between which numerous fertile valleys wound in and out, thickly covered with brushwood and trees of various descriptions. The bombax loaded the wind with the fine thistly-like down of its seeds; the strong perfume of the datura—the “kenda” of the Arabs—reached even to the “Victoria;” the papan tree, with its palmated leaves; the calabash tree, which produces the Soudan nut; the baobabs and bananas—all formed part of this rich and luxuriant inter-tropical Flora.

“What a magnificent country!” said the Doctor.

“There are some animals!” cried Joe. “Men are not far off.”

“Ah, what splendid fellows! Look at these elephants! Can’t we stop and have a little hunting?”

“How can we, my dear Dick, travelling with so strong a current as this? No; you must endure a new version of the tortures of Tantalus. You will be able to make up for it soon.”

There was enough, indeed, to excite the imagination of a hunter. Dick’s heart beat fast, and his fingers closed tightly round the stock of his rifle. The Fauna of the country equalled the

Flora. Wild cattle wallowed in the thick grass, which grew so high that they were entirely hid by it. Grey, black, and yellow elephants of enormous size, tore like a whirlwind through the forest, tearing down the trees, champing up the smaller branches, and breaking everything in their course of devastation. On the woody sides of the hills innumerable brooks ran in little cascades towards



the north, and in these hippopotami plunged about with frightful noise; whilst on the banks sea-cows twelve feet long displayed their fish-like bodies, with their enormous teats swollen with milk. It was altogether a wonderful menagerie in the midst of as wonderful an aviary, in which birds without number and of a thousand colours sparkled like gems between the tree-like plants. By this

prodigality of nature the Doctor recognised the Kingdom of Adamova.

"We are encroaching on modern discoveries now," said the Doctor, "and are taking up the track of former travellers, for, by a happy chance, we are about to join to the explorations of Burton and Speke those of Barth. We leave the line of discovery of our countrymen to follow that of a Hamburger, and soon we shall reach the extreme limit attained by that adventurous explorer."

"It seems to me," said Kennedy, "that between these two tracks of exploration there is a good bit of country, if I may judge by the length of the way we have come."

"It is easily reckoned. Take the map and look for the longitude of the northern point of Lake Ukéréoué reached by Speke."

"It is not far from the thirty-seventh degree."

"And the town of Yola, which we shall see this evening, and which Barth arrived at, where is that situated?"

"At about the twelfth degree."

"That made twenty-five degrees of sixty miles each, which will be fifteen hundred miles."

"A pretty long march on foot."

"It will be accomplished nevertheless. Livingstone and Moffat are continually marching towards the interior. The Nyassa which they have discovered is not very far distant from Lake Tanganyika which Burton reached. Before the end

of the century all these immense countries will certainly be explored."

"I am sorry," added the Doctor, looking at the compass, "that the wind takes us so far west, I should have liked a more northerly direction."

After twelve hours' voyaging the "Victoria" was over the borders of Nigritia. The first inhabitants of that land—the Arab Chouas—grazed large flocks of sheep, and led a nomadic life from place to place.

The towering summits of Mount Atlantika now rose above the horizon—a mountain which no European foot had ever trodden, and whose height is estimated at nearly eight thousand feet. The western slope of this chain determines the flow of all the waters of that part of Africa towards the ocean—they are the Mountains of the Moon of that region.

At last a real river appeared under the travellers' feet, and by the immense ant-hills in its neighbourhood, the Doctor recognised the Benoué, one of the great affluents of the Niger, the same which the natives have named "The Father of Waters."

"This river will one day become the natural means of communication with the interior of Nigritia. Under the command of one of our brave sailors the *Pleiad* steamer has already ascended as high as the town of Yola, so we are now in a country that something is known about."

Numerous slaves were at work in the fields, engaged in the cultivation of sorgho, a sort of millet; which forms the principal article of food, who stared stupidly at the "Victoria," as she passed like a meteor.

That evening they stopped at forty miles from Yola. Before them, but at a great distance, rose the two needle-like cones of Mount Mendif. The anchors were thrown, and soon caught in the top branches of a lofty tree; but the wind was so strong that the balloon was blown almost horizontal, and the position of the car was at times extremely dangerous.

The Doctor never closed an eye all night, and several times was on the point of cutting the cable and letting the "Victoria" fly before the tempest; but at length a calm succeeded, and the oscillations of the balloon ceased to cause any uneasiness.

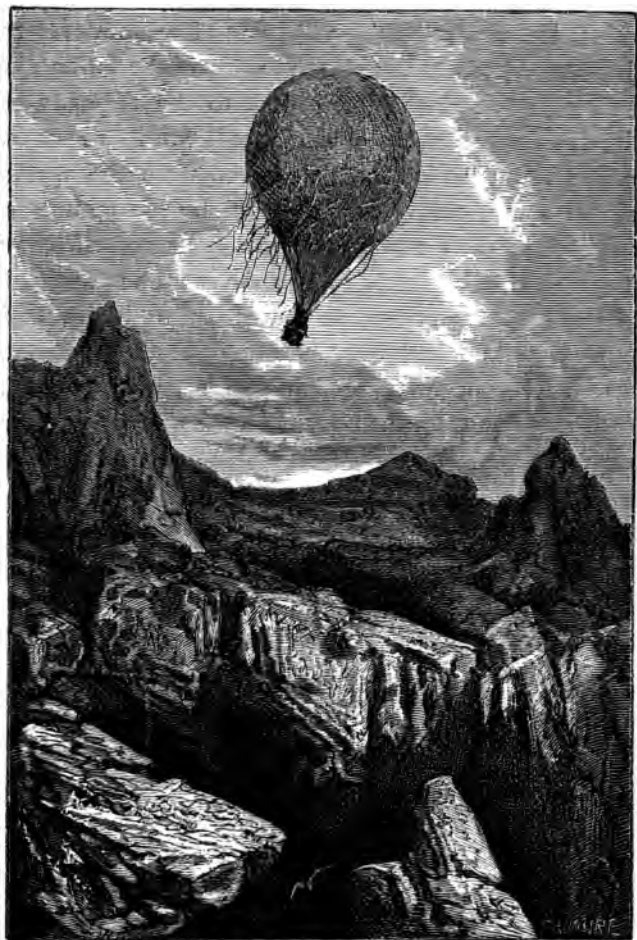
Next morning, though the wind had moderated it had shifted, and took them away from the town of Yola, which had just been rebuilt by the Foullannes, and which the Doctor was curious to see; but there was no help for it, and they bore off northwards and a little towards the east.

Kennedy wanted to halt and enjoy a little hunting, and Joe pretended that fresh meat was necessary; but the savage manners of the country, the attitude of the population, and some musket shots which had been fired at the "Victoria," determined the Doctor on continuing on his way.

This country over which they were travelling is the theatre of constant fires and massacres, where fierce and bloody battles are incessantly waged, and where the sultans reign over the different tribes in the midst of carnage. Numerous populous villages were seen in the midst of pastures, where the grass was lost among violet-coloured flowers; the huts, looking like immense beehives, were protected by strong thorny palisades. The wild and rugged nature of the hills, with their valleys, reminded Kennedy of the glens of his native Scotland.

Despite his efforts, the Doctor found his course bore north-east towards Mount Mendif, whose summits, hidden by clouds, separate the basin of the Niger from that of Lake Tchad. Soon after Mount Bagélé came in view, with its eighteen villages nestled in its valleys, like children in their mother's bosom, a magnificent sight for our travellers, who could take in the whole scene at a glance. The fields were generally covered with crops of rice.

At three o'clock they were opposite Mount Mendif, and there was nothing for it but to cross it. The Doctor raised the heat of the furnace, and the "Victoria" rose to a height of eight thousand feet. This was the greatest height attained during the voyage, and the temperature fell so low that they were all glad to wrap themselves in their rugs. The Doctor hastened to descend, for the balloon



The Crater of Mount Mendif.

was distended so much as to threaten to burst ; but he had time to decide that the mountain was of volcanic origin, the deep abysses of extinct craters being everywhere visible, the sides of the mountain looking perfectly white, owing to the deposits of the innumerable birds which build in its recesses. At five, the "Victoria," sheltered from the winds of the south, gently glided down by the mountain slopes, and was made fast in a great clearing, far from any habitation. As soon as she touched ground, Kennedy sprang out, gun in hand, and soon had knocked over half a dozen wild ducks, and a kind of snipe, which Joe speedily cooked, and after a good supper, they enjoyed a calm night's rest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mosfeia.—The Sheik.—Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Vogel.—The Capital of Loggoum.—Toole.—Becalmed over Kernak.—The Governor and his Court.—The Attack.—The Fiery Pigeons.

EARLY next morning they were off, feeling as much confidence in the "Victoria" as a sailor does in his ship. Terrible hurricanes, tropical heats, dangerous departures, and descents more dangerous still, the "Victoria" had successfully encountered them all. The Doctor seemed to guide her as he wished, and had no fears about their arriving in safety at the end of their voyage. In this land of barbarians and fanatics, however, prudence made him take the strictest precautions, and he told his companions to keep constantly on the watch.

Still keeping to the north, they came, about nine o'clock, in sight of Mosfeia, a large town built on an eminence, closed in between two high mountains, and in an impregnable position. It was accessible only by one road, which ran between a marsh on one hand and a wood on the other.

Just then, a sheik, accompanied by a mounted escort, clothed in the most brilliant colours, preceded by trumpeters and runners, who cleared the passage of branches, entered the town. The Doctor descended in order to have a nearer look at the natives; but, as the balloon descended, it gradually looked larger and larger; signs of terror were evident, and they lost no time in running off as fast as their legs or their horses could carry them. The sheik alone did not stir; he took his long musket, cocked it, and waited proudly. The Doctor, when within a hundred and fifty feet of the ground, saluted him in Arabic in the politest manner. But at the sound of these words descending from the sky, the sheik dismounted and prostrated himself in the dust, nor could the Doctor persuade him to rise.

"These people," said he, "undoubtedly take us for supernatural beings, since, on the first arrival of Europeans amongst them, they were believed to be superhuman; and when the sheik speaks of this meeting he will not fail to amplify the fact with all the resources of Arabian imagination. You may fancy, then, what sort of legends will one day be told of us."

"That might be troublesome," said Dick, "from a civilised point of view. It would be better they took us simply for men. That would more strongly impress these niggers with an idea of European power."

"Just so, my dear Dick ; but how are you going to do it? You would be a long time explaining the construction of a balloon to them, and after all they would not understand you, and still believe it something supernatural."

"Beg pardon, sir," said Joe, "but you were speaking of the first Europeans who explored this country. May I ask who they were?"

"Yes, my lad! We are now exactly taking Major Denham's route. At Mosfeia itself, he was received by the Sultan of Mandara. He had left Bournou, and accompanied the sheik in an expedition against the Fellatahs, was present at the attack on the town, which, although only defended by arrows, put the sheik's troops to flight: this was a pretext for murder and pillage. Denham was utterly stripped naked, and but that he glided under the belly of a horse, on which he afterwards managed to mount and flee at a gallop for life, he would never have returned to Kouka, the capital of Bournou."

"But who was this Major Denham?"

"A brave Englishman, who, in company with Captain Clapperton and Dr. Oudney, commanded an expedition into Bournou during the years 1822, '23, and '24. They started from Tripoli in the month of March, arrived at Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan, and following the road which Barth afterwards took to return to Europe, in the following February they reached Kouka, near Lake

Tchad. Denham made many explorations into Bournou, Mandara, and the eastern shores of the Lake. At the same time Clapperton and Oudney penetrated into the Soudan as far as Sackatoo, and Oudney died of fatigue and exhaustion at the town of Murmur."

"This part of Africa," said Kennedy, "has sacrificed many victims to science."

"Yes; this country is fatal! We are now going direct for the kingdom of Barghimi, which Vogel traversed in 1856, in order to penetrate into Wadai, where he disappeared. This young man of three-and-twenty had been sent to co-operate with Barth, and they met in December, 1854, when Vogel began his explorations. About 1856, his last letters announced his intention of visiting the kingdom of Wadai, where no European had ever been. It appeared that he did arrive at Wara, the capital, when, according to some accounts, he was made prisoner, and according to others, put to death for having attempted the ascent of a holy mountain thereabouts. It does not do, however, to admit lightly the accounts of travellers' deaths, for that does away with the necessity of going to look after them; for instance, how many times has not Barth, to his infinite annoyance, been reported dead? It is possible, then, that Vogel has been made prisoner by the Sultan of Wadai, who hopes he may be ransomed. M. de Heuglin, with an expedition from Leipsig, is now on his traces, how-

ever, and we may hope to hear the truth as to the fate of this young explorer.”*

Mosfeia had long disappeared beneath the horizon. Mandara displayed to the travellers its astonishing fertility—its forests of acacias, of locust trees, with their scarlet flowers, and fields of cotton and indigo; and amidst this, the Shari rolled its impetuous course on its way to mingle its waters with those of Lake Tchad.

The Doctor made his companions trace the course of this river on Barth’s map.

“You see how correct he is? We are now bound direct for the district of Loggoum, and perhaps even for its capital, Kernak, where a young ensign of the 80th regiment died, who had only joined Denham a few weeks when he met his death. Well may this country be called the burial-place of Europeans!”

Some canoes, fifty feet long, were descending the course of the Shari; but the “Victoria,” at a height of a thousand feet, attracted little attention from the natives. The wind, which had been blowing pretty strongly, now began to cease, and the Doctor feared they might be again caught in a perfect calm.

A shout from Joe made him look round—

“There!—there is something like a town!”

* Since the Doctor left, letters written by M. Munzinger (then in charge of the expedition) from El-Obeid, leave no doubt of Vogel’s death.

"It is Kernak : there is just wind enough to waft us as far, and it will be a good opportunity to make a correct plan of the place."

"Shall we not get a little nearer?"

"Nothing easier, Dick ; we are right over the town, and will descend at once."

Half-an-hour later, the "Victoria" was suspended motionless two hundred feet from the ground.

"We are nearer Kernak now," said the Doctor, "than you would be to London if you were roosting on the top of St. Paul's. Here we can look at our ease."

"What is that noise of mallets which we hear on all sides?"

Joe looked attentively, and saw that the noise was caused by weavers, who were beating pieces of stuff, or cloth, hung over large trunks of trees in the open air.

The capital of Loggoum lay beneath, like a plan. It was a veritable town, with houses built in lines, and with tolerable streets. In the middle of a large open square a slave market was being held, and there were plenty of customers, for the women of Mandara are celebrated for their small hands and feet, and are much sought after.

At the sight of the "Victoria," the effect so often seen was again produced. At first loud cries, followed by a profound stupefaction ; business was abandoned, work was suspended, noise ceased.

Our travellers remained perfectly still ; they did

not lose a detail of that populous city, and even descended within sixty feet of it.

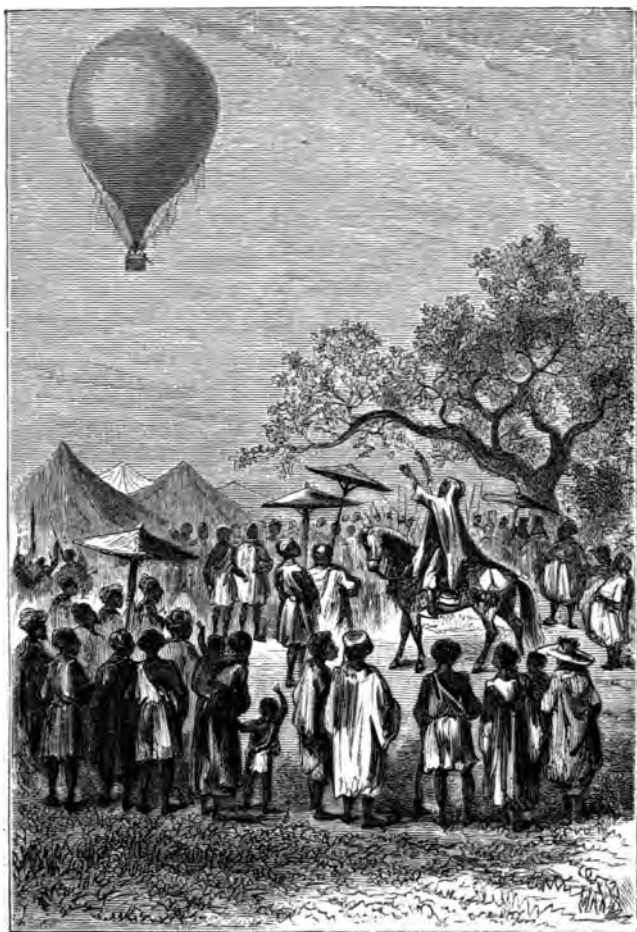
Then the governor of Loggoum came from his house, displaying his green standard, and accompanied by his musicians, who produced the hoarsest and most horrible sounds on buffalo horns. The crowd gathered round him, and the Doctor tried to make himself heard, but could not manage to do so.

This population, with their lofty foreheads, curling hair, and almost aquiline noses, looked proud and intelligent; but the sight of the "Victoria" evidently troubled them. On every side horsemen dashed about, and it was soon clear that the troops were being collected together to fight this extraordinary enemy.

Joe was busily waving handkerchiefs of all colours, but without result.

The sheik, surrounded by his court, proclaimed silence, and made a speech, of which the Doctor could make nothing. It was Arabic, mixed with Baghirmi, but his gestures left no doubt of his meaning; it was an express invitation to be off. He could not have asked better, but as there was no wind the thing was impossible.

The immovability of the balloon exasperated the governor, and his courtiers began yelling to drive the monster away. Strange-looking fellows these courtiers were, wearing five or six shirts speckled with colours, and having enormous bellies: so large, indeed, that some looked false.



The Governor of Loggoum.

The Doctor astonished his companions by informing them that that was the way in which they paid their court to the Sultan. The rotundity of paunch expressed the ambition of the man. These fat men gesticulated and howled : one especially, who, if his fatness ever gets its deserts here below, ought to have been prime-minister.

The crowd of negroes added their yells to the cries of the courtiers, imitating their gestures like so many monkeys, which produced a unique and instantaneous motion of ten thousand arms.

To these means of intimidation, which were judged insufficient, were now added others more formidable. Soldiers, armed with bows and arrows, were ranged in order of battle, but the "Victoria" was already inflated, and rose tranquilly out of shot. The governor, however, seized a musket, and pointed it at the balloon, but Kennedy was too quick for him, and a ball from his rifle broke the weapon in his hand.

At this unexpected shot there was a general rout ; every one scampered into his cottage, and during the rest of the day the town remained deserted.

Night came, but no wind ; it was resolved to wait at three hundred feet high till morning. Not a light was to be seen in the darkness, and the silence of death reigned around. The Doctor redoubled his precautions—the calm might conceal a snare. And need there was to watch. About

midnight the whole town looked as if on fire ; hundreds of streams of light crossed each other like rockets, forming a perfect entanglement of lines of flame.

“ Well, that is strange ! ” said the Doctor.

“ Heaven help me ! ” cried Kennedy ; “ but the fires seem to rise and approach us ! ”

And in reality, to the noise of frightful cries and



the reports of muskets, this mass of fire rose towards the “ Victoria.”

Joe got ready to throw out the ballast, and the Doctor was not long in finding out the meaning of the phenomenon.

Thousands of pigeons, with combustible materials fastened to their tails, had been let off against the “ Victoria ; ” terrified, they flew upwards, tracing

zigzags of fire in the darkness. Kennedy would have discharged every barrel amongst them, but what good would that have been where there was an army of birds of fire, which already surrounded the car and the balloon, the silk of which, reflecting the light, seemed a net of fire? The Doctor did not hesitate; a large block of quartz was thrown over, and they rose at once out of the vicinity of these dangerous birds.

For two hours they could be seen flying about here and there in the night; then, little by little, their numbers diminished, and the lights died out.

"Now we may sleep in peace," said the Doctor.

"Not bad for savages," said Joe.

"Yes, they very commonly use pigeons for setting fire to the thatch of villages, but this time the village flew higher than their winged incendiaries."

"Decidedly, a balloon has no enemies to fear," laughed Kennedy.

"I'm not sure of that."

"Who then?"

"The careless fellows in the car; therefore, above all things, keep a bright look out!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

They leave in the Night.—Kennedy's Instincts.—Precautions.—The Course of the Shari.—Lake Tchad.—The Hippopotamus.—A Shot thrown away.



AT three in the morning, during Joe's watch, the town disappeared beneath his feet; the "Victoria" had caught a breeze, and was on her travels. Kennedy and the Doctor awoke; the latter looked at the compass, and saw with pleasure that the wind bore them north-north-east.

"We are in luck," said he; "all goes well. We shall catch sight of Lake Tchad this very day."

"Is it a large piece of water?" asked Kennedy.

"Considerable, my dear Dick. This lake is about a hundred and twenty miles long."

"That will vary our voyage a little, a trip across a sheet of water."

"Well, I don't think we have anything to complain of. Our voyage has been varied enough, and we are tolerably comfortable."

"True, Samuel; except the privations in the desert, we have run no serious danger."

"Our brave 'Victoria' has behaved splendidly. To-day is the 12th of May; we started on the 18th

of April, that is twenty-five days' travelling ; in ten days more we shall have reached the end of our voyage."

"Where?"

"I know nothing about it; but what does it matter to us?"

"You are right, Samuel; let us leave to Providence the care of directing us and keeping us in good health; we don't look now as if we had crossed the most pestilential country in the world."

"At the same time, we shall have learnt something."

"Hurrah for voyages in the air!" cried Joe. "Twenty-five days, and here we are, well fed and well rested; a little too much so, perhaps, for my joints are getting a little rusty, and I shan't be sorry to give them a thirty-mile stretch."

"You will soon be able to do that in London, Joe. But here are three of us, like Denham, Clapperton, and Overweg: like Barth, Richardson, and Vogel; and, more fortunate than our predecessors, here we are all still together. And we must keep so. If one of us were on the earth, and the 'Victoria' had to start to escape some sudden or unforeseen danger who knows if we should ever see him again? So, I tell you frankly, Dick, I don't like your going any distance off on pretext of sport."

"Well, friend Samuel, you are very likely right ;

but it is not a bad thing to renew our stock of provisions. Besides, you promised me no end of superb hunting, and I've done nothing yet in the Anderson and Cumming line."

"You've either a bad memory, Dick, or your modesty makes you forgetful, for, besides small game, I think you have already an antelope, an elephant, and two lions, on your conscience."

"What is that to an African hunter who sees all the animals in creation passing at the end of his rifle! Why, look there; look at that herd of giraffes."

"These, giraffes? Why they are no bigger than my finger!"

"Yes, because we are a thousand feet above them. Were you down there you would find they are three times as high as you are."

"And what do you say to that flock of gazelles; or these ostriches, who fly like the wind?"

"Ostriches!" muttered Joe; "no bigger than fowls."

"I say, Samuel, can't we get down near them?"

"Yes, but not to land. What is the use, then, of shooting animals that can be of no use to you? If you were anxious to kill a lion, a tiger, or a hyena I could understand it; it would always be one dangerous beast less; but an antelope or gazelle, only to gratify your instincts as a sportsman, is not worth the trouble. However, as we are now going to descend within a hundred feet of

the ground, if you see any wild beasts put a ball through them, with all my heart."

The "Victoria" descended, but kept at a safe distance from the earth, for in this savage and populous country unexpected perils were always to be dreaded.

Our travellers followed the course of the Shari. The charming banks of the river were lost to sight under the shady foliage of various trees, where lianas and climbing plants twined in all directions, producing a perfect entanglement of colours. Crocodiles lay sunning themselves, or plunged beneath the waters with the activity of lizards, to reappear on some of the many green islands that broke the current of the river.

In the heart of such rich and verdant scenery did they pass over the district of Maffatay, and at nine in the morning they reached the southern shore of Lake Tchad. There it lay, that Caspian of Africa, whose existence had been so long regarded as a fable—that wonderful central sea which had only been seen by two Europeans before—Denham and Barth.

The miry and all but insurpassable marsh which surrounds this lake makes a correct map of it impossible. From one year to the other these marshes, covered with rushes and reeds fifteen feet high, become the lake itself. Often the villages on its shores are half submerged, as happened to Ngornou in 1856, and now hippopotami and

alligators plunge beneath the waters on the same places where the habitations of the Bournou formerly stood.

The sun cast its dazzling rays upon the tranquil waters, and to the north sky and water blended in the horizon.

The Doctor wished to discover the nature of the water, which had long been believed to be salt. There was no danger in nearing the surface of the lake, and the car skimmed over it like a bird at five feet from the surface. Joe lowered in a bottle, and drew it up half full; the water was tasted and found very undrinkable.

While the Doctor was noting the results of his experience, the report of a gun resounded at his ear. Kennedy had been unable to resist the desire to send a ball into a monstrous hippopotamus, who disappeared at the sound of the report, Dick's conical ball not appearing to trouble him.

"It would be better to harpoon him," said Joe.

"But how?"

"With one of our anchors; that sort of hook should suit such a beast."

"Ah!" said Kennedy, "that is a capital idea, Joe——"

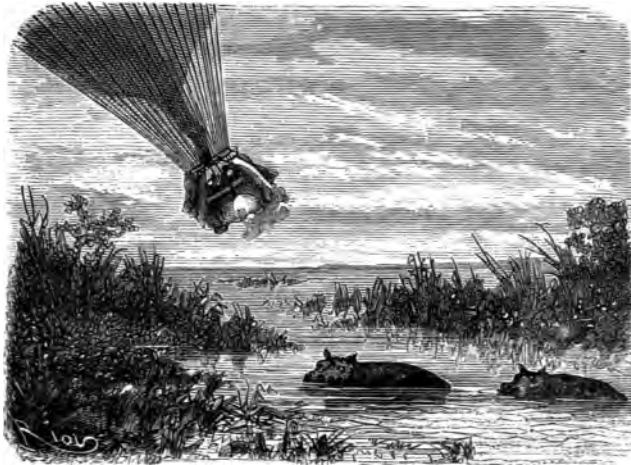
"Which I beg you won't put into execution," broke in the Doctor; "the animal would soon drag us where we have no business to be."

"Especially now we know what the water of

Lake Tchad is like. Do they eat these fish, sir?"

"Your fish, Joe, is really a pachydermatous mammifer; they say its flesh is excellent; and a considerable trade is done in it among the tribes along the shores of the lake."

The big words seemed to satisfy Joe, who only



remarked that he wished that since such was the case, that Mr. Dick's shot had been more successful.

"These brutes, Dick, are only vulnerable in the belly and between the thighs; your ball only grazed the one you fired at; but if I see a suitable place to halt on the northern shore we will do so, and you will then be in a regular menagerie, and can enjoy yourself as much as you like."

“I hope you’ll shoot a hippopotamus, sir; I should like to taste a bit of him. What’s the use of coming to Africa to eat partridges and snipes as we do in England!”

CHAPTER XXV.

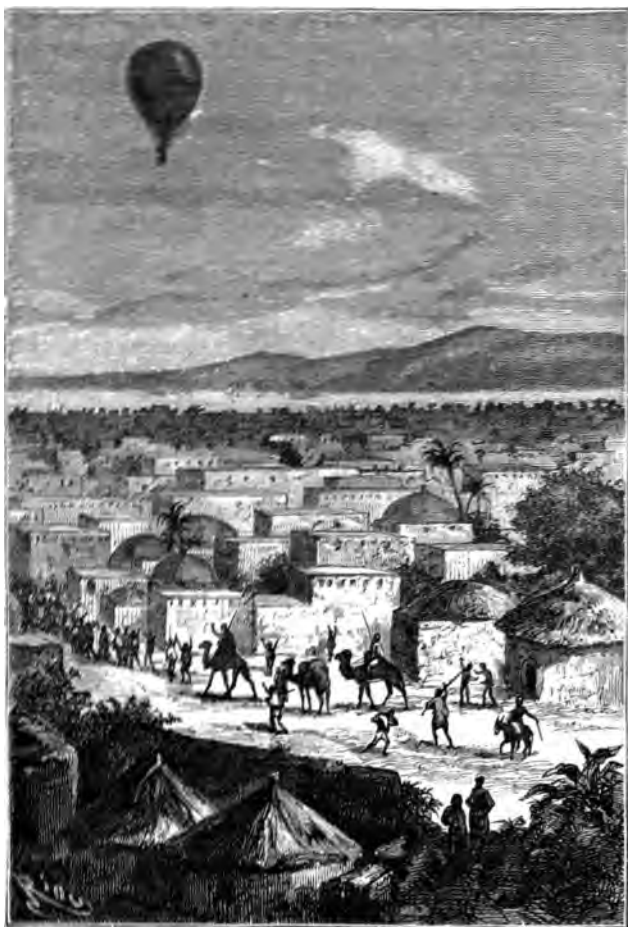
The Capital of Bournou.—The Biddimah Islands.—The Griffin-Vultures.—The Doctor's Precautions.—Attacked in the Air.—The torn Balloon.—The Fall.—Devotedness.—Northern Side of the Lake.

SINCE their arrival at Lake Tchad, the "Victoria" had met with a current which bore more to the west; some clouds tempered the heat of the day, and the air was always cool above that expanse of water.

About one o'clock, the balloon having crossed that part of the lake obliquely, had again travelled inland seven or eight miles.

The Doctor, who was not very much pleased at this change, had nothing to regret when he perceived the town of Kouka, the capital of Bournou. He could catch a glimpse of it in an instant, surrounded by its white clay walls. Some mosques of considerable size rose heavily above the square, dice-shaped houses of the Arabs. Palm trees and India-rubber trees grew in the courtyards of the houses, and in the public squares, covered with their domes of foliage a hundred feet across.

Kouka is really two distinct towns, separated by a "dendal," a wide street eighteen hundred feet



The Town of Kouka.

long, at that time thronged with people on foot and on horseback. On one side of this—the rich part of the town—are the lofty and airy houses of the wealthy; on the other were sunk the wretched assemblage of low and conical huts in which the destitute population vegetated; for Kouka is neither commercial nor industrial.

Kennedy found something about it not unlike Edinburgh, with its two towns distinctly marked.

Hardly had the travellers time to get a glance at it, however, before the wind, with the changeableness which characterises the currents in that country, blew from another quarter, and took them back forty miles across Lake Tchad. They had then a new spectacle before them; they could count the numerous islands in the lake, inhabited by the Biddiomahs, a set of fierce and blood-thirsty pirates, whose neighbourhood is as much dreaded as that of the Touaregs of the Sahara. These savages made ready to receive the "Victoria" with flights of arrows and stones, but she had soon got clear of these islands, over which she passed like a gigantic moth.

Joe, who was looking out, turned to Kennedy, saying,—

"For you, sir, who are always dreaming of hunting, here comes a chance."

"What is it, Joe?"

"And this time master will not object to your shooting."

"But what is it?"

"Do you see down there, sir, that flock of large birds that are coming this way?"

"Birds?" said the Doctor, seizing his glass.

"I see them," said Kennedy; "there are, at least, a dozen of them."

"Fourteen, sir," replied Joe.

"I trust they are of some breed so mischievous that tender-hearted Samuel won't object to my keeping my hand in."

"I have nothing to say to it, but I should like better to see these birds far from us."

"You are afraid of these birds, sir?"

"They are Gier-Eagles, and of the largest size. Should they attack us——"

"We will defend ourselves, Samuel. We have an arsenal ready for their reception. I don't think these birds are so very formidable."

"Who knows?" said the Doctor.

Ten minutes after the flock were within shot. These fourteen birds made the air resound with their hoarse and savage cries, and they came on to the "Victoria" more irritated than frightened at the sight of it.

"How they scream," said Joe; "what a racket! I suppose they object to our trespassing on their domains, the more that we can fly as well as they can."

"On my word," said Kennedy, "they do look terrible, and would be more so if they each carried a rifle."

"They don't require them," said the Doctor, who was looking very serious.

The Gier-Eagles wheeled round the "Victoria" in immense but ever-nearing circles; now shooting across the sky with wondrous rapidity, then descending with the speed of a rifle-ball, would spread their wings and glance off at an abrupt angle. The Doctor, now really uneasy, resolved to rise still higher, to escape from such unpleasant neighbours; he expanded the hydrogen, and the balloon immediately began to rise. But the Gier-Eagles ascended with it, not at all disposed to leave it.

"They seem determined to have it," said Dick, cocking his rifle.

And, indeed, these fearful birds were getting nearer and nearer, more than one of them within fifty feet of the car, and as if braving Dick's skill.

"I've a deuced good mind to fire."

"No, Dick, no; don't render them furious without reason. That would only incite them to attack us."

"But I'll very quickly make an end of them."

"You're mistaken, Dick."

"We have a bullet for each of them."

"And if they get up above the balloon, how are you to get at them? Fancy yourself facing a troop of lions on land, or of sharks in the ocean—for us the situation is as dangerous."

"Are you speaking seriously?"

"Very seriously, Dick."

"Let us wait, then."

"Yes, wait. Hold yourself ready in case of attack; but do not fire till I give the word."

The birds were now clustered together at a little distance, and it was easy to distinguish their bare and featherless throats distended with the efforts of their screams, and their cartilaginous crests, crowned with violet-coloured excrescences, which they erected with fury. They were of enormous size, measuring fully four feet in length, with a stretch of wing of more than twenty feet. Their white wings glittered again in the sunbeams. One would have thought them winged sharks, to which they bore a terrible resemblance.

"They follow us," said the Doctor; "and although we are extremely high, their flight can take them a great deal higher."

"What is to be done then?"

The Doctor did not reply.

"Look here," said Kennedy, "there are fourteen of them; we have seventeen shots at our disposal. Is there no means of destroying or of dispersing them? I will undertake to give a good account of some of them."

"I don't doubt your skill, Dick. Indeed, I look upon every one you catch a glimpse of through the sights of your rifle as dead. But, I repeat, if they attack the top of the balloon you won't be able to

see them ; they will tear the covering which sustains us, and we are three thousand feet from the earth."

At that very moment one of the most ferocious of these birds made a swoop for the upper part of the balloon, its beak and claws open—ready to bite, ready to tear.

"Fire! fire!" cried the Doctor.

As the words left his lips the bird, struck dead, fell whirling through space. Kennedy had seized one of his double-barrels. Joe raised the other to his shoulder. Frightened by the report, the Gier-Eagles had scattered for an instant, but they immediately returned to the charge, screaming with rage. With a single ball Kennedy cut off the head of one ; Joe smashed the wing of another.

"Only twelve," said he.

But then the birds changed their tactics, and, with one accord, rose above the "Victoria."

Kennedy looked at the Doctor. In spite of his energy and resolve, the latter had become pale. There was a moment of awful silence. Then came the strident sound of rending silk, and the car sank under the feet of the travellers.

"We are lost!" cried the Doctor, casting his eyes on the barometer, which rose with startling rapidity. Then he added—"Over with the ballast! over with the ballast!" In a couple of seconds every fragment of quartz had disappeared. "Still we keep falling! Over with the water cases! Do you

understand, Joe? We are precipitated into the lake!"

Joe obeyed. The Doctor leant over. The lake seemed to be coming at him like a rising sea; objects enlarged before the glance. The car was not two hundred feet from the surface of Tchad.

"The provisions! the provisions!" cried the Doctor. And the case that held them was thrown into space. The descent became less rapid; but still the unfortunate men were falling.

"Heave away!" cried the Doctor; "heave away!"

"There is nothing more!" said Kennedy.

"Yes!" cried Joe, laconically, and he disappeared over the edge of the car.

"Joe! Joe!" cried the Doctor, terrified. But Joe could no longer hear him.

The "Victoria," lightened of the excess of weight, rose gradually to the height of a thousand feet, and the wind, engulfing itself in the torn covering, bore her to the northern shore of the lake.

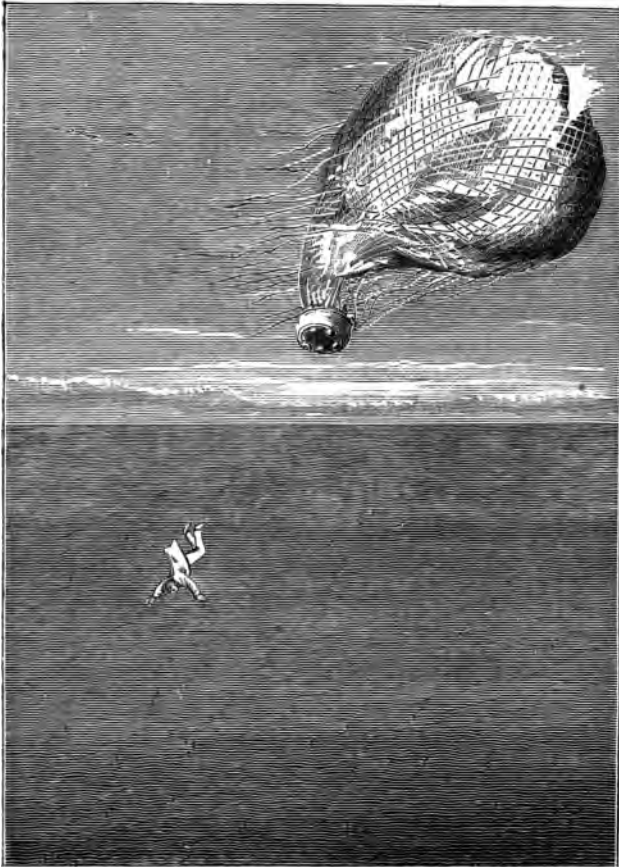
"Lost!" cried Dick, with a gesture of despair,

"Lost to save us!" replied the Doctor. And the eyes of both these brave and intrepid men filled with tears.

They leant over, trying to distinguish some trace of the miserable Joe, but they were already far away.

"What is best to be done?"

"Descend as soon as possible, Dick; and then wait."



Joe's Devotion.

After a voyage of sixty miles the "Victoria" was "landed" upon the desert at the north of the

lake. The anchors caught in a tree of no great height, and Dick carefully made them fast. Night fell, but neither the Doctor nor Kennedy could take a moment of slumber.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Conjectures.—Equilibrium restored.—Fresh Calculations.—Kennedy goes Shooting.—Complete Exploration of Lake Tchad.—Tangalia.—Return.—Lari.

NEXT day, the 13th May, our travellers' first care was to examine the part of the shore they occupied. It was a kind of island of firm land in the middle of an immense marsh. Around this little patch of solid earth rose enormous reeds, as large as European trees, which extended till lost to sight. These impassable swamps made the position of the "Victoria" secure. It was only necessary to keep a watch along the side of the lake. This vast sheet of water was spread out before them towards the east, and nothing could be seen, neither continent nor island. The two friends had not yet dared to speak of their unfortunate companion. Kennedy was the first to impart his conjectures to the Doctor.

"Perhaps Joe is not lost," said he. "He is a clever lad, and there are few swimmers like him. He could swim across the Firth of Forth at Edinburgh. We shall see him again, though when and how I don't know. But, on our side, let us neglect no means to give him an opportunity to rejoin."

"May heaven hear you, Dick!" said the Doctor, in a voice broken with emotion. "We shall do all in the world to find our friend again. Let us put ourselves to rights. But first let us relieve the 'Victoria' of the exterior covering, which is now quite useless; that will relieve us of a considerable weight—no less than six hundred and fifty pounds, which will repay the trouble."

The Doctor and Dick went to work, but experienced great difficulties. They had to tear away the strong taffetas in little bits, in order to get it through the meshes of the network. The rent made by the powerful beak of the Gier-Eagle extended several feet. This took them at least four hours of hard work; but fortunately the interior balloon, entirely cleared of the wreck, had received no injury whatever. The "Victoria" was then one-fifth less in size, and the difference was so great as to astonish Kennedy.

"Will it be sufficient?" he asked.

"Fear nothing on that account, Dick. I shall restore the balance of the balloon, and if our poor Joe comes back we shall be well able to proceed on our voyage."

"At the moment of our fall, Samuel, if I recollect rightly, we were not far from an island."

"I recollect it; but that island, like all those in Tchad, is no doubt inhabited by pirates and murderers. These savages must certainly have witnessed our catastrophe, and if Joe has fallen

into their hands, unless superstition protects him, what will become of him?"

"He is the man to get himself out of the business, I repeat; I have every confidence in his address and intelligence."

"I hope so. Meanwhile, Dick, do you go shooting in the neighbourhood, but do not go far off. We must renew our stock of provisions, of which the greater part has been sacrificed."

"All right, Samuel, I won't be long away."

Dick took his double-barrel and walked off through the tall reeds to a patch of brush-wood not far off, and frequent reports soon apprised the Doctor that his shooting would be fruitful.

During this time the Doctor busied himself in re-arranging what had been kept in the car, and in establishing the equilibrium of the second balloon. There remained thirty pounds of pemmican, some tea and coffee, about a gallon and a half of brandy, and an empty water case, but all the preserved meat had disappeared. He knew that by the loss of the hydrogen of the first balloon the buoyancy had been lessened very considerably; it was on account of that difference that he had to calculate again his operations for restoring the balance.

The new "Victoria" had a capacity of sixty-seven thousand cubic feet, and contained thirty-three thousand four hundred and eighty cubic feet of gas. The apparatus for expanding the gas appeared to be in good condition; neither the Bunsen battery,



Good Sport.

nor the serpentine worm had been damaged. The buoyancy of the new balloon was, then, about three thousand pounds, and adding together the weight of the apparatus, the travellers, water, and the car, with its accessories, reckoning fifty gallons of water and a hundred pounds of fresh provisions, the Doctor arrived at a total of two thousand eight hundred and thirty pounds. He could thus carry a hundred and seventy pounds of ballast for unforeseen occasions, and the balloon would then be in equilibrium with the surrounding air. His arrangements were made in consequence, and Joe's weight replaced by a quantity of ballast. He employed the whole day in these preparations, and they were complete when Kennedy returned.

Dick had had good sport. He bore a whole load of geese, wild ducks, snipe, teal, and plovers, and turned his attention to preparing his game and smoking it. Each piece, stuck on a slender skewer, was suspended over a fire of green wood, and when he thought all ready—and he thoroughly understood what he was about—all was stowed away in the car. Next day he would complete the stock of provisions.

Night surprised the travellers in the midst of their work. Fatigue gave them an appetite for their supper, and brought them sound sleep; but the watches were still kept, and each in his turn listened attentively, in the hopes of hearing Joe's

voice, but the voice they would so well have liked to hear was far distant.

At the first blush of day the Doctor awoke Kennedy.

"I have been thinking for a long time of how we can manage to find Joe."

"And what is your project? I agree to it beforehand."

"If possible, Joe should have tidings of us."

"Certainly. If the brave lad should imagine that we would abandon him!"

"He! he knows us better; no such idea would ever enter his head; but he must learn where we are."

"How can we do that?"

"We will get into the car and make an ascent."

"But if the wind carries us away?"

"There will be none of it. See, Dick, the breeze will take us back again over the lake, and that circumstance, which would have been annoying yesterday, is the very thing we want to-day. We will limit our efforts to keeping over the bosom of the lake all day long, where Joe will not fail to see us, as he is sure to look there for us. Perhaps we may even find out the place he is in."

"If he is alone and free, he will soon let us know it."

"If he is a prisoner," answered the Doctor, "he will see us, and understand what we are about, for the natives here do not shut up their captives."

"But," returned Kennedy, "I think we should look at every possibility. If we can find no traces whatever of the poor fellow, what shall we do?"

"We will try to regain the northern shore of the lake, keeping ourselves as much in sight as possible; there we will wait, exploring the shores on all sides, for towards these Joe would certainly try to make his way, and we will not leave the place without having done all in our power to find him."

"Come on, then!" cried Dick.

The Doctor found that little piece of solid ground where they had landed lay, according to the map, on the north of Tchad, between the villages of Lari and Ingemini, both of which Denham had visited.

Kennedy had by this time completed his stock of fresh meat, and although he had seen in the marsh many traces of both rhinoceroses and hippopotami, he had not seen any of these enormous animals.

At seven in the morning, Dick managed with much difficulty—which would have been nothing to Joe—to free the anchor, and the new "Victoria" rose two hundred feet. After whirling round for a minute or two, it caught a brisk breeze, and began its voyage across the lake at twenty miles an hour. The Doctor kept at a height varying from two hundred to five hundred feet, and Kennedy frequently discharged his rifle. They approached the various islands almost too closely to be prudent, searching with eager eyes in the brush, the bushes,

and the thickets, wherever there was a shady place or a hole in the rocks that might have formed a hiding-place for their companion.

They several times descended close to the long canoes of the natives, but these fishermen, at sight of them, plunged into the water and made for their island in unmistakeable terror.

"We can't see anything," said Dick, after two hours looking about.

"Wait a bit, Dick, and don't lose heart; we can't be far now from the scene of the accident."

At eleven the "Victoria" had made ninety miles, when a current was met with which drove them almost at a right angle to the course they had been pursuing sixty miles eastward. They crossed a very large and populous island, which the Doctor took to be Farram, where the Biddiomahs have their capital. They expected to see Joe spring from every bush; if free, they could have caught him up without difficulty, or if a prisoner, they could again employ the manœuvre they had used in the case of the missionary; but nothing could be seen, nothing heard of him.

At half-past two they sighted Tangalia, a village situated on the eastern shore of Tchad, and the extreme point reached by Denham. The persistence of the wind in this direction made the Doctor uneasy, as it was fast bearing them to the centre of Africa and its interminable deserts.

"It is imperative that we stop," said the Doctor,

“even if we have to land. For Joe’s sake, above all, we must keep over the lake ; but, first of all, we must try to find a different current from this.”

For more than an hour they sought for a favourable wind in different zones, the “Victoria” all the while bearing off to the land, till, on ascending to a thousand feet, they encountered a gale which drove them to the north-west.

It was not possible that Joe was on any of the islands in the lake, or he would certainly have found means to let them know it ; most likely he had been taken ashore. Thus reasoned the Doctor when he regained the northern shore of the lake. As to thinking that Joe was drowned, that was inadmissible. There was, however, one horrible idea which occupied the minds of both our friends : caymans were numerous in these waters ! but neither of them had yet given utterance to the thought, when the Doctor, as if answering a question, said :

“ Crocodiles are only found on the shores of the lakes or on the islands, and Joe would be clever enough to escape them ; besides, they are not very dangerous, and the natives bathe with impunity, without fearing their attacks.”

Kennedy said nothing. He preferred holding his tongue to discussing the horrible probability.

At five in the evening the Doctor pointed out the town of Lari. The inhabitants were employed in gathering their cotton, before cabins of plaited

reeds ; the fields all properly enclosed and carefully tended. This collection of about fifty cottages lay in a valley, which ran for some distance between low hills.

The violence of the wind drove the Doctor much further than he wished ; but changing a second time, it led him back to the very little sort of island where the previous night had been passed. The anchor, instead of catching in the branches of the tree, fixed among the thickly-matted reeds which lay mixed in the mud of the marsh, and which afforded good holding ground. The wind was so strong as to give some trouble with the balloon, but it went down at night, and the two friends slept together, almost hopeless.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Another Hurricane.—Compelled Departure.—Loss of an Anchor.—
Sad Reflections.—A fixed Resolve.—The Whirlwind.—A Caravan
swallowed up.—Variable Winds.—Return to the South.—
Kennedy at his Post.

AT three in the morning the wind began to rise, and blew with such fury that the “Victoria” could no longer remain near the earth without great danger; the reeds crushed in its envelope, which they threatened to tear.

“We must be off, Dick; it won’t do to stop here.”

“But Joe?”

“I will not abandon him, and if this hurricane should carry me a hundred miles to the north, I shall return; but here we are compromising the safety of all.”

“To go without him!” said the Scot, in accents of grief.

“Do you think, then,” returned the Doctor, “that I do not feel it as much as you? Can you not see that I must obey an imperious necessity?”

“I am ready,” said Dick; “let us start.”

But the departure presented great difficulties. The anchor, deeply fixed, resisted all efforts, and

the balloon, drawing strongly against it, made the task still more trying. Kennedy could not manage to tear it free; besides, as the matter stood, his manœuvre would become very perilous, for the "Victoria" might then rise before he could rejoin her. The Doctor, not wishing to run such a risk, made him come up into the car, and prepared himself to cut the anchor rope. The "Victoria" bounded three hundred feet into the air, and carried due north.

Nothing could be done but submit to the power of the tempest. The Doctor crossed his arms, and gave himself up to sad reflections. After some time he turned to Kennedy, who was not less taciturn.

"We have perhaps offended heaven," said he. "Men should not have undertaken such a voyage," and a deep sigh broke from the Doctor's breast.

"Only a few days ago, we were congratulating each other on having escaped so many dangers, and were shaking hands over it."

"Ah! poor Joe!—brave and honest heart!—a moment dazzled by his wealth—how willingly he sacrificed his treasures! And now, who knows how far he is from us, and we travelling away from him at this tempestuous speed?"

"Look here, Samuel; supposing he has found protection among some of the tribes near the lake, why should he not come off as well as Denham or Barth?—they returned to their country."

"But then, Dick, Joe does not know a word of the language—he is alone, and without resources! The travellers you speak of never advanced without sending numerous presents to the chiefs, in the midst of an escort armed and prepared for these expeditions; and, moreover, they were not able to escape sufferings and trials of the worst kind. What, then, may happen to our unfortunate companion, it is horrible to think of, and is one of the bitterest griefs I have ever felt."

"But we shall return."

"We shall return, Dick, if we have to abandon the 'Victoria' and walk on foot to Lake Tchad, and even have an interview with the Sultan of Bournou! The Arabs cannot have any recollections but pleasant ones of the first Europeans!"

"And I will follow you, Samuel!" cried Dick with energy. "You can reckon on me! Sooner let us give up all hopes of ending this voyage. Joe is devoted to us—let us sacrifice ourselves for him!"

This resolution formed, the hearts of these two men felt more cheerful—the idea strengthened them. The Doctor set to work to find another current which would take them back towards Lake Tchad; but just then it was impossible, nor could a descent be effected in that desert country in the midst of a hurricane.

Thus the "Victoria" traversed the country of the Tibbous, and surmounted Belad and Djerid, two

hills which mark the border of the Soudan, and penetrated into the deserts of sand, furrowed by the traces of many a long caravan. The last line of vegetation soon mingled with the sky at the southern horizon, not far from the principal oasis of that part of Africa, whose fifty wells are shaded by magnificent trees, but to stop was impossible. An Arab encampment, with its tents of striped stuffs, and some camels stretched along the sand with their snake-like heads, gave a look of life to the solitude; but the "Victoria" passed like a shooting-star, and ran a distance of sixty miles in three hours, without the Doctor being able to change his course.

"We cannot halt," said he—"we cannot descend—not a tree—not a hillock. Must we cross the Sahara? Heaven help us!"

The Doctor was almost mad with despair when he saw in the north the sands of the desert rising in thick clouds of dust, and whirling round under the impulsion of opposing currents. In the midst of the whirlwind, crushed, broken, and overturned, an entire caravan disappeared beneath the avalanche of sand; the camels, crowded pell-mell together, uttered the most lamentable groans; whilst shrieks and yells came out of the suffocating cloud. For a moment some brightly-coloured burnous would gleam amid the chaos, and then the howling of the tempest reigned supreme over that scene of destruction. The sand quickly accumulated in compact

masses, and where a few minutes before lay a level plain, a hill arose, still heaving with the life beneath it—the desert tomb of the lost caravan !

The Doctor and Kennedy looked on at this awful spectacle ; they could no longer manoeuvre the balloon, which whirled about in different currents, and refused to ascend or descend with the different temperatures of the gas. Caught in these



eddies of the air, it whirled round with giddy rapidity, the car describing great oscillations ; the instruments suspended under the tent clashed together as if they would be smashed ; the pipes of the serpentine bent as if about to break ; the water cases were loosened from their place, and increased the uproar ; at two paces the travellers could not hear each other, and with one hand twisted round

the ropes they held on and tried to keep up against the force of the storm. Kennedy, with his hair flying wildly in the storm, looked on without a word, and the Doctor, whose boldness had returned when in the midst of danger, showed nothing of the emotions which agitated him, not even when the "Victoria," after a last whirl, suddenly stopped quite still in an unexpected calm ; the north wind had caught it above, and drove it back again over the route it had just travelled with at least equal speed.

"Where are we ?" cried Dick.

"Trust in Providence ! my dear Dick. I was wrong to doubt it ; it knows what is for the best, and here we are now returning to the very places we never more hoped to see."

The ground which had lain under their feet as they came, had now the appearance of the sea after a tempest ; a number of little hillocks dotted the desert on all sides ; the wind blew fiercely, and the "Victoria" flew before it. The direction they now pursued differed a little from that they had followed in the morning, so, at nine o'clock, instead of finding themselves at the shores of Lake Tchad, they still saw the desert stretching before them.

Kennedy remarked as much.

"It does not matter," said the Doctor, "the great thing is to get south ; we are sure to meet with the towns of Bournou, Wouddie, or Kouka, and I shall not hesitate to stop at any one of them."

"If you are satisfied, I am ; but heaven grant that we may not have to cross the desert like those unfortunate Arabs ; it was frightful !"

"These storms often occur. Desert voyages are as dangerous as those of the ocean ; and, you may suffer as great or greater privations in the desert, and still be liable to be swallowed up in its waves of sand."

"The wind appears to be going down a little, the sand does not blow about so much, and it is clearer towards the horizon."

"All the better ; we must examine on all sides carefully with our glasses, and take care that not a spot escapes our view."

"I will take care of that, Samuel, and the first tree shall not appear without my informing you of it."

And Kennedy, glass in hand, posted himself on the front of the car.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Joe's Story.—The Biddiomahs.—They worship him.—The Island disappears.—Shores of the Lake.—A Tree full of Serpents.—Journey on Foot.—Sufferings.—Mosquitoes and Ants.—Hunger.—The "Victoria" passes; disappears.—Joe's Despair.—In the Swamp.—A last Cry.



HAT had become of Joe during the un-availing search of his master? When he threw himself into the lake, his first movement on reaching the surface after his plunge was to look upwards. There he saw the "Victoria," already at a considerable height, rise higher and higher, till caught in a rapid current, it disappeared to the northward. His master—his friends were saved!

"How lucky," said he to himself, "that I had that idea to throw myself into this Tchad! No one can say Mr. Kennedy hasn't got plenty of pluck, and if he had thought of it, he would have done as I did;—for what's more natural to a man than to save other people?"

Having settled this point, Joe began to think about himself. He was in the middle of an immense lake, which was surrounded by people



Joe in Lake Tchad.

entirely unknown, and undoubtedly ferocious ; it was clear he must depend on himself to get out of the mess ; but that was all that disturbed him.

Before the attack of the Gier-Eagles, he had spied an island on the horizon, and to that he resolved to swim, using all his knowledge of the useful art. He soon got rid of the heavier of his clothes, and felt quite prepared for a swim of five or six miles, especially as he was in the very middle of the lake, and there was no danger there from shallows or rocks. At the end of an hour and a half, he had considerably diminished the distance ; but as he approached land, a thought, which at first had merely glanced through his mind, now took firm hold of it. He knew that the shores of the lake were infested by enormous alligators, and he knew the voracity of these animals. He was a good deal shocked. He feared that crocodiles might not have any decided dislike to a white-skin, and he made his way with great care, keeping his eye on the watch. He was not more than a hundred fathoms from a bank sheltered by green trees, when a puff of air, heavy with the smell of musk, caught his nostrils.

"Confound it !" said he, "just what I dreaded—there's an alligator hereabouts."

He dived instantly, but not so quickly as to avoid contact with an enormous body, the scaly epidermis of which tore the skin off his back as he passed it. He believed himself lost, and began to swim with

the quickness of desperation, rose to the surface for breath, and again dived and disappeared. He endured nearly a quarter of an hour of unspeakable anguish, which all his philosophy could not overcome; and fancied he could hear coming up behind him the noise made by these immense jaws which were about to bite him in two. He was swimming along as noiselessly as possible, but in a terribly frightened state of mind, when he felt himself seized by an arm, that clutched him round the body.

Poor Joe! Giving a last thought to his master, he prepared to struggle to the last, when, instead of being dragged to the bottom, as is the habit of alligators and caymans with their prey, he was pulled up to the surface. Scarcely had he breathed and opened his eyes when he found himself between two negroes, as black as ebony, who held him tightly and uttered strange cries.

"Hold hard! There is nothing to hinder you calling out, Joe!—niggers in place of caymans. By Jove! this is a good deal better. I wonder, though, that these gentry dare bathe in such a spot as this!"

Joe did not know that the inhabitants of the islands of Lake Tchad, like many blacks, dive with impunity into waters infested with crocodiles, without taking any notice of their presence; and the amphibious animals of the lake have a well-merited reputation of being very inoffensive.

But had Joe only escaped one danger to plunge

into another? Events will decide. In the meanwhile he allowed them to conduct him to the shore without betraying the slightest fear.

"Clearly," thought he, "these niggers have seen the 'Victoria' skim along the lake, like a monster of the air; they have also witnessed my fall from a distance; and they ought to have a good opinion of a man fallen from heaven! Let me see what they will do!"

Joe had got so far in his reflections, when he was landed in the midst of a howling crowd, of all sexes and ages, but not of all colours: they were a tribe of Biddiomahs, of a splendid black. He had not even to blush at the lightness of his costume, for he was "undressed," in the latest fashion of the country. But before he had time look about him, he could not mistake the worship of which he had become the object; and this by no means reassured him: he had not forgotten the adventures at Kazeh.

"I foresee that I am going to be made a god of again; a son of the Moon, perhaps. Well, one thing's as good as another, when you've no choice. What concerns me is that it will give me time, and if the 'Victoria' should repass, I will give my adorers the 'spectacle' of a miraculous ascension."

Whilst Joe reflected thus, the crowd closed in around him; they prostrated themselves, they howled, they felt him, and became familiar; but, at least, they had thought enough to offer him a magnificent feast, consisting of curdled milk and

rice, mixed with honey. Joe, who could generally take care of himself, made one of the best meals he ever ate in his life, and gave the people a high idea of how gods can eat on grand occasions.

When night came, the sorcerers of the island took him respectfully by the hand, and led him to a cabin surrounded with talismans. Before entering, Joe threw an uneasy glance at the heaps of bones piled up round this sanctuary. He had plenty of time, besides, to reflect on his position when he was shut up in the hut.

During the evening and part of the night he heard their festal songs, the beating of some kind of drum, and a noise of fighting; very pleasant for African ears. The yelling choruses were accompanied by interminable dances, performed around the sacred cabin, with all sorts of antics and contortions.

Joe could watch the whole of this deafening performance through the walls of mud and reeds of which the cabin boasted. He might, perhaps, in other circumstances, have taken a lively interest in their strange ceremonies, but his soul was sad with an idea which tormented him terribly. Looking at the bright side of things, it would be a sad and miserable fate to be lost for ever in that savage country in the midst of such people. Few travellers who have dared to venture into these countries have ever again seen their own. How could he take any pride in the adoration of which he was

the object? He had good reason to believe in the vanity of human affairs. He asked himself if, in that country, adoration was not the first step towards eating the adored!

In spite of this uninviting look out, after some hours of reflection, fatigue overpowered him, and Joe fell into a sleep so deep that it would doubtless have lasted till daybreak, if an unexpected sense of dampness had not roused the sleeper. Very soon this dampness became water, which rose so quickly that Joe was soon waist deep.

"What is this?" said he. "An inundation, a waterspout, or a new torture of these niggers? By Jove! I'm not going to wait here till it is up to my neck!"

So saying, he knocked down the wall with a push of his shoulder, and found himself—Where? In the middle of the lake!

The island was no more; it had been submerged during the night, and in its place was the immensity of Lake Tchad!

"A miserable country for landed proprietors!" said Joe, as he again struck boldly out.

A phenomenon not infrequent on Lake Tchad had effected Joe's deliverance. More than one island has thus disappeared, which seemed as solid as the rock; and often the shore dwellers have to pick up the wretches who have escaped from these terrible catastrophes.

Joe knew nothing of this peculiarity, although

he had unconsciously profited by it. Swimming along, he caught sight of a deserted boat, and was quickly alongside. It proved to be the trunk of a tree clumsily hollowed, and at the bottom lay a pair of paddles, but Joe, finding himself in a current, let himself drift.

"Let's pull ourselves together," said he. "The polar star, which shows everybody the way to the north, would come in very handy if he would only show himself just now."

But he saw with satisfaction that he was drifting northward with the current, and about two in the morning he landed on a promontory covered with thorny bushes and reeds, which tried even Joe's philosophic temper. A tree growing at a little distance seemed to offer him a bed in its branches, into which, for greater safety, he climbed, and without getting very much sleep, waited for day-break.

Morning came with that rapidity peculiar to equatorial regions, and Joe gave a glance on the tree which had sheltered him during the night, only to be struck with terror at the unexpected sight. The branches of the tree were literally covered with serpents and chameleons, the foliage was lost to sight under their twinings and interlacings: one would have thought the tree of a new species that produced serpents. With the first rays of the sun, all of these horrible animals began to twist and crawl. Almost overcome with terror,



The Serpents' Tree.

mingled with disgust, Joe jumped to the ground amid the hissing of the reptiles.

"Well, I couldn't have believed that," said Joe, "and I don't think anybody would."

He did not know that Vogel's last letters had mentioned that peculiarity of the shores of Lake Tchad, where reptiles are more numerous than in any other country in the world.

After what he had seen, Joe determined to be more circumspect for the future, and taking his bearings by the sun, he started off towards the north-east.

He avoided with great care cabins, cottages, huts, even holes that were likely to shelter anything human. How often did he raise his eyes and look round the sky: he hoped yet to see the "Victoria;" and though he had sought in vain during all his day's travel, his confidence in his master was unshaken.

Hunger was now added to fatigue, for roots and the pith of the arbutus trees, such as the "mélé" of the natives, will not keep up a man's strength; and Joe reckoned that he had made a thirty miles' march.

His body bore in twenty places the marks of the thousand thorns with which the lake reeds, the acacias, and mimosas bristle, and his bleeding feet made walking extremely painful; but he was able to bear up under his sufferings, and when evening arrived, determined to pass the night on the shores

of Lake Tchad. Here he had to submit to the painful stings of myriads of insects, flies, mosquitoes, and ants, half-an-inch long, with which the ground was literally covered. At the end of two hours Joe had not a rag left of the few clothes he wore, the insects had eaten them to the last shred!

This was a terrible night, it brought not an hour's sleep to the wearied traveller; and all the time wild boars, wild cattle, and the ajoub, a most dangerous kind of sea-cow, raged amongst the bushes and in the waters of the lake, and a concert of wild beasts resounded through the stillness of the night. Joe dared not stir; his resignation and patience were scarcely able to hold out against such a terrible situation.

Day broke, at last, and Joe started precipitately to his feet. Imagine his disgust to see the filthy animal which had slept close to him—a toad!—but a toad over five inches long; a monstrous, repulsive beast, which glanced at him out of its great round eyes. Joe felt almost sick, but, repressing his repugnance, he ran quickly and plunged into the waters of the lake; this bath in some degree eased the bites which tortured him; and after having chewed some leaves, he took his way again with an obstinacy, an infatuation for which he could not account; he no longer seemed to know what he was about, but felt gifted with a strength superior to despair.

To allay in some measure the horrible pangs of hunger from which he now suffered, he bound one of the long and pliable lianas several times tightly round his body, which somewhat relieved him. Water there was plenty ; and, recalling his awful sufferings in the desert, he felt a relative happiness that he had not to suffer the torments of that imperative want.

“Where could the ‘Victoria’ be ?” he asked himself. “The wind blows from the north ; it must then come over the lake again. The Doctor no doubt had made the balloon all right again—but a day would suffice for that. It was not then impossible that this very day——. But let us act as if one should never see him again. After all, if I could reach one of the large towns on the lake I should be no worse off than the travellers my master has spoken about to us. Why shouldn’t I get out of this as well as they ? There were some of them who got back again. What the deuce ! Come on, old boy ; never say die !”

Joe kept walking on and speaking to himself in this way, when in the midst of the forest he came right upon an assemblage of savages. He stopped in time without being seen.

The negroes were busy poisoning their arrows with the sap of the euphorbia, a great occupation among all the tribes of these countries, and which is conducted with a kind of solemn ceremony.

Joe, stealthily holding his breath, had hidden

himself in the heart of a thicket, when raising his eyes through a clear space in the leaves above, he perceived the "Victoria," the "Victoria" herself, bearing towards the lake, scarcely a hundred feet above him. Impossible to make himself heard! Impossible to show himself! His eyes filled with tears, not of despair, but of thankfulness. His master was looking for him; his master had not abandoned him! As soon as the negroes departed he could leave his retreat and run towards the shores of Lake Tchad. But by that time the "Victoria" was lost to his sight in the distance. Joe resolved to wait for her. She would pass again certainly—she would pass again, but more to the east. Joe ran, gesticulated, cried, but it was in vain. A strong wind bore away the "Victoria" with irresistible swiftmess.

For the first time energy and hope failed in the heart of poor Joe. He saw himself lost; he believed his master gone never to return; he dared not think; he did not wish to reflect. Like a madman, with bleeding feet and bruised body, he walked all that long day and part of the night; he dragged himself along, now on his knees, now on his hands; and he felt the moment approaching when his strength would at last fail him and he would die. Advancing thus he came to a marsh, or rather what he very soon knew to be one, for, it having been dark for some hours, he fell unexpectedly into a mud hole. Spite of his efforts and

the desperate resistance he offered, he felt himself sinking deeper and deeper into this tenacious



Help! Help!

mire. In a few moments he was as deep as his thighs.

"Death at last," said he, "and what a death!"

He struggled furiously, but each effort only helped to bury him still deeper in the grave he was digging for himself. Not a branch was he able to reach; not a reed even to catch hold of. He understood it was all over. He closed his eyes.

“Help! master, help!” he cried.

But that despairing, solitary voice, already suffocating, was lost in the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A Crowd in the Distance.—Troop of Arabs.—The Pursuit.—'Tis He !
 —His Horse falls.—Strangling an Arab.—A Ball from Kennedy.
 —Manœuvring.—Caught at Flying.—Joe Saved.



SINCE Kennedy had taken his post of observation in the front of the car, he had not ceased attentively to examine the horizon. At the end of some time he turned to the Doctor, and said :

“If I am not mistaken, there is a troop in motion down there ; whether men or animals it is too far off to see ; at any rate they are in rapid motion, as they raise a cloud of dust.”

“May it not be another contrary wind,” said the Doctor, “which will drive us again to the north ?” And he rose to examine the horizon.

“I don’t think so ; it looks more like gazelles or wild cattle !”

“Perhaps, Dick ; but as they are nine or ten miles from us, I can’t make them out even with the glass.”

“Anyhow, I won’t lose sight of them. There is something there that puzzles me. That was uncommonly like a cavalry manœuvre. I am right ! they are horsemen. Look !”

The Doctor looked attentively.

"I believe you are right," said he; "it is some body of Arabs or Tibbous; they are going in the same direction as ourselves, but we are moving much faster, and will soon overtake them. In half an hour we shall be quite near enough to see what they are like and what is to be done."

Kennedy again took up his glass. Several horsemen were visible, and some detached themselves from the main body.

"It is a manœuvre or a hunt. They look to me as if they were chasing something. I should like to know what it is!"

"Patience, Dick! in a very short time we shall overtake them, and even pass them if they continue on this route; we are going twenty miles an hour, and there are no horses that can keep up that speed."

Kennedy kept his glass to his eye.

"They are Arabs, going at full speed. I can make them out perfectly. There are almost fifty of them. I can see their burnous blowing out against the wind. It is a cavalry exercise; the chief rides twenty paces a-head, and they gallop after."

"Whoever they are, Dick, there is nothing to fear from them; and if there is, I shall ascend."

"Wait—wait a while, Samuel!"

"It is strange," Dick went on, still using his glass, "I can't exactly understand their move-

ments. By the efforts they seem to be making, and the irregularity of their line, they have more the appearance of pursuing, than of only following some one."

"Are you sure of it, Dick?"

"Perfectly. I am not deceived. It is a regular hunt, but a man-hunt. It is not a chief who precedes them, but a fugitive!"

"A fugitive?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes!"

"Don't lose sight of them; and let us wait."

Three or four miles were quickly gained on the horsemen, who, however, tore along at a great pace.

"Samuel! Samuel!" cried Dick, in a trembling voice.

"What's the matter, Dick?"

"Is it hallucination? Is it possible?"

"Wait!"

The hunter rapidly wiped the lenses of his glass, and looked again.

"Well?" asked the Doctor.

"'Tis he! Samuel."

"He!" cried the Doctor.

"He," told all. There was no need to name him.

"'Tis he, on horseback, not a hundred paces from his enemies! He flies!"

"'Tis really Joe!" cried the Doctor, turning pale.

"He cannot see us in his flight!"

"He shall see us," cried the Doctor, lowering the flame of his furnace.

"But how?"

"In five minutes we shall be fifty feet from the ground; in fifteen, right over him."

"We must warn him by a shot."

"No, no; he cannot turn back, he is cut off."

"What's to be done?"

"Wait."

"Wait! And these Arabs?"

"We shall reach them; we shall pass them; we are not two miles off, and provided Joe's horse holds out——"

"Good heaven!"

"What is it?"

Kennedy had uttered a cry of despair on seeing Joe thrown to the ground. His horse, evidently spent and exhausted, had fallen.

"He has seen us," cried the Doctor. "He made a sign to us as he got up."

"But the Arabs are on him! What does he wait for? Ah! the brave lad! Hurrah!" cried Dick, unable to contain himself.

Joe rose instantly from his fall, and at the moment that the best mounted horseman dashed down on him, gave a spring like a panther, and, Joe avoiding his attack, sprang behind him, seized the Arab by the throat with his powerful hands, and with his iron fingers strangled him, and threw

him out of the saddle to the sand, and dashed on his fearful course.

A loud cry from the Arabs rose on the air ; but, engrossed in their chase, they had not seen the "Victoria," five hundred paces behind them, and scarcely thirty feet from the ground. They were not thirty lengths from the fugitive's horse. One of them was rapidly gaining on Joe, and was just about to pierce him through with his lance, when Kennedy's quick eye and steady hand stopped him with a bullet and tumbled him out of the saddle.

Joe did not even look round at the report. One part of the troop checked their speed, and threw themselves with their faces in the dust at the appearance of the "Victoria"—the others continued the pursuit.

"What is Joe doing?" cried Kennedy; "he does not stop!"

"He does better than that, Dick. I understand him—he keeps in the direction of the balloon. He reckons on our intelligence. Ah! the brave lad! We will carry him off from under the beards of these Arabs—we are only two hundred paces off!"

"What must I do?"

"Lay your gun down."

"There 'tis," said Dick, dropping it.

"Can you hold 150 lbs. of ballast in your arms?"

"More than that!"

"No, that will do." And the Doctor piled the sacks of sand in Kennedy's arms.

"Keep close to the edge of the car, and be ready to throw over all the ballast at once in an instant; but, on your life, do not do it till I give the order!"

"Be easy!"

"Unless you do we shall lose Joe, and he will be destroyed!"

"Never fear for me!"

The "Victoria" was then over the troop of horsemen, who, with slackened bridles, followed close on Joe's steps. The Doctor, in the front of the cradle, held the silken ladder in hand ready to be launched at the right moment. Joe still maintained a distance of fifty feet from his pursuers.

The "Victoria" passed them.

"Attention!" cried the Doctor to Dick.

"I'm ready!"

"Joe! look out!" cried the Doctor in a ringing voice, as he threw the ladder, the first rung of which trailed in the dust.

At the Doctor's call, Joe, without stopping his horse, turned—the ladder was close beside him, and in a moment he had firmly clutched it.

"Pitch!" cried the Doctor to Dick.

"Done!"

And the "Victoria," having lost more ballast than Joe's weight, rose to the height of 150 feet. Joe held on tightly to the ladder during the great



A Close Shave!

oscillations which his weight occasioned, then, making an indescribable gesture to the Arabs, he climbed up with the agility of a clown, and reached his companions, who received him in their arms.

The Arabs uttered a cry of surprise and rage at seeing the fugitive thus carried off on the wing, and the "Victoria" rapidly distancing them.

"Master! Mr. Dick!" Joe had said. Succumbing to emotion and fatigue, he had fainted; whilst Kennedy, almost mad with delight, kept repeating—"Saved! saved!"

"Take it coolly, Dick," said the Doctor, who had regained all his quiet impassibility.

Joe was almost naked, his arms bloody, and his body covered with bruises—all told of his sufferings. The Doctor dressed his wounds, and laid him down under the tent.

Joe soon came out of his fainting fit, and asked for a glass of brandy, which the Doctor did not think right to refuse him. It did not do to treat Joe like everybody else.

After having drank, he shook his two companions by the hand, and declared himself ready to tell his story. But this they would not hear of; and the brave lad soon fell into a deep sleep, of which he seemed to have great need.

The "Victoria" then took an oblique line towards the west. Driven by a strong wind, they again saw the borders of the thorny desert: below, the palm trees had been levelled with the ground

or torn to pieces by the tempest; and after traversing nearly two hundred miles since Joe was recovered, they crossed that evening the tenth degree of longitude.

CHAPTER XXX.

Westward ho !—Joe wakes ; End of his Story.—Tagelel.—Kennedy Uneasy.—Northward.—A Night near Aghades.



HE wind, during the night, rested after its violence during the day, and the "Victoria" remained peaceably on the top of a great sycamore. The Doctor and Kennedy watched in turn, and Joe profited by it to take a good sleep for twenty-four hours.

"That is the remedy he requires," said the Doctor ; "nature herself will cure him."

The wind was tolerably strong next morning, but very capricious, and, after varying about from north to south, at last carried the "Victoria" to the west.

The Doctor, map in hand, recognised the kingdom of Damerghou, an undulating country of great fertility. The huts of its villages built of long reeds mixed with the branches of the asclepia ; in the cultivated fields, heaps of grain were raised on little scaffoldings, to preserve them from the attacks of mice and ants.

Very soon after they reached the town of Zinder, easily recognised by its large square devoted to

executions. In the centre rises the tree of death; the tradition is that the executioner watches at the foot of it, and whoever passes within its shadow is immediately hanged.

Looking at the compass, Kennedy could not help saying—

“Here we are going northward still!”

“What matters? If it should take us to Timbuctoo we shan’t complain. Never was a pleasanter voyage accomplished, nor under better circumstances.”

“Nor in better health,” returned Joe, placing his happy-looking face against the net-work of the tent.

“Well, my brave Joe,” cried Kennedy, “saviour of our lives, how goes it?”

“Capitally, Mr. Kennedy, capitally! I never was better! Nothing so good for a man as a bath in Lake Tchad and a pleasure-trip afterwards. Is is not, sir?” said Joe, appealing to the Doctor.

“My worthy fellow!” said the Doctor, shaking him by the hand, “what grief and uneasiness you have caused us!”

“Look at yourself, sir! Do you think I took your fate quietly? You may boast of having given me a dreadful fright, sir!”

“We shall never be able to make you out, Joe, if you take things in that fashion.”

“I see his fall has had no effect on him.”

“Your devotion was sublime, my lad, and it

saved us, for the 'Victoria' would have fallen into the lake, and once there, it could never have been got out again."

"If my devotion, as it pleases you to call my tumble, sir, saved you, it saved me too, and since we are all three here, sound in wind and limb, there is nothing more to be said."

"It is impossible to get to an understanding with this fellow," said Dick, laughing.

"The best understanding, sir, is to say no more about it. What is done is done. Good or bad, it is of no use ever referring to it."

"Obstinate as ever," said the Doctor, smiling. "At least, you will tell us all that happened to you?"

"If you will wait a little, sir. Meanwhile I will see to the cooking of this fat goose, for I see Mr. Dick has not been losing his time."

"As you like, Joe."

"Very well; we will try how African game suits European stomachs."

The goose was speedily grilled, and soon after devoured; Joe eating like a man who had fasted for days.

After tea and a glass of grog, Joe gave his companions a history of his adventures, and despite his naturally philosophic turn, he could not do so without emotion. Several times the Doctor pressed his servant's hand, for he saw that before his own safety he had thought of his master's. The Doctor

also explained to Joe the mystery of the disappearance of the island of the Biddiomahs.

At last, Joe, in pursuing his narrative, came to the moment when, plunged to the middle in the marsh, he uttered a last cry of despair.

"I believed myself lost, sir, and my thoughts turned to you; and I determined to struggle. Why, I cannot say, but I had decided not to be choked without having a say in the matter, when, two paces off, I saw the end of a rope freshly cut. I made a last effort, and somehow got hold of the cable; I pulled, it resisted, till at last I dragged myself on to firm footing. At the end of the rope I found an anchor—ah, sir, I have a good right to call that the anchor of safety, if you will allow me. I recognised it, an anchor of the 'Victoria;' you had landed there! I followed the direction of the rope, which gave me the direction you had taken, and after fresh exertions I got out of the quagmire.

"My strength seemed to have come back with my courage, and I walked part of the night, getting to a greater distance from the lake, till I reached the borders of a large forest, where, in an enclosure, some horses were peacefully grazing.

"There are moments when any man can ride on horseback—it must be so. Without a moment's reflection I jumped upon the back of one of these steeds, and we started off for the north at top speed. I need say nothing of towns I did not see, and of villages which I avoided.

"On I went through fields of flowers. I jumped the hedges, I urged on my horse, exciting him and lifting him along till I reached the limits of cultivation.

"At last! the desert! That was what I wanted; I could see better before me, and I could see farther. I every moment expected to see the 'Victoria' waiting for me along the borders of it. It was not to be seen!

"At the end of three hours I fell, like a fool, into an Arab encampment. Ah, what a chase! A hunter does not know what hunting is, Mr. Dick, till he's been hunted himself, although, if he will take my advice, he will never try it.

"Well, sir, my horse falls down with fatigue; they are close on me. I pick myself up, I leap up behind an Arab! I did not wish to do so, and I hope he will bear me no grudge for having strangled him. But I had seen you, and you know everything that happened afterwards.

"The 'Victoria' followed on my track, and you carried me off flying. Was not I right, then, in depending upon you? I would not mind doing it all over again, if it would be of any use to you; but, as I said, it is not worth talking about."

"My brave Joe, I was quite right in feeling confident in your intelligence and address!"

Whilst Joe had been telling his story, the balloon had cleared a great extent of country, and Kennedy now pointed out a collection of huts in the

distance, which the Doctor, on looking at his map, stated to be the little town of Tagelel, in the Damerghou.

"We come again here," said he, "on Barth's route. It was here he left his two companions, Richardson and Overweg; the first started for Zinder, the second for Maradi, but as you know, Barth alone lived to return to Europe."

"But," said Dick, "looking at the course we are pursuing, it seems we go due north."

"Just so."

"And you don't feel uneasy about it?"

"Why should I?"

"Because this route will take us across the Great Desert to Tripoli."

"Oh, we won't go so far, Dick; at least, I hope not."

"Where do you intend to stop, then?"

"How would you like to go to Timbuctoo?"

"Timbuctoo!"

"No doubt," put in Joe, "it would never do to make such a voyage across Africa without visiting Timbuctoo."

"You will be the fifteenth or sixteenth European who has ever seen that mysterious town."

"On we go to Timbuctoo, then!"

"Wait till we get to the seventeenth or eighteenth degree of latitude, and I will try to find a current that will bear us to the west."

"How much farther north have we to go?"



The Kailouas' Country.

"A hundred and fifty miles at least."

"In that case," replied Dick, "I shall go to sleep for a bit."

"You had better lie down also, sir; I have made you watch long enough."

But, though Kennedy lay down, the Doctor remained at his post of observation.

At the end of three hours, the "Victoria" had crossed with great velocity a rugged and stony country, with ranges of lofty and bare granite mountains, some of whose highest peaks reached a height of four thousand feet. Giraffes, antelopes, and ostriches, bounded with marvellous agility through forests of acacias, mimosas, and date trees. The desert was passed, and vegetation had resumed its sway.

This was the land of the Kailouas, who cover their faces with bands of cotton, as do their dangerous neighbours, the Touaregs; and at ten at night our travellers saw by the moonlight a half-ruined town, with here and there the minarets of a mosque rising beneath them, which the Doctor pronounced to be Aghades: which, at one time the centre of a large trade, had now quite decayed.

The "Victoria," unseen in the darkness, after a voyage of two hundred and fifty miles, landed two miles from Aghades, in a field of millet, but the wind soon after changing to the east, was too favourable not to be taken advantage of, and the Doctor again started with the first rays of day.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Rapid Travelling.—Prudent Resolutions.—Caravans.—Gao.—The Niger.—Famous African Travellers.

ALL day long on the 17th of May the "Victoria" bore south-west, without varying in the least. Her shadow traced a straight line on the sand. Before starting the Doctor had prudently renewed his stock of water, as he feared they might not be able to land in the countries infested by the Touaregs. The flat country over which their route lay was about eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and sloped gradually to the south.

During this day Joe cooked the last of the game. The night was lighted by a splendid moon, and the Doctor availed himself of it to travel without halting, and the balloon that night made about sixty miles with so little motion that the sleep of an infant would have been undisturbed. Another change in the wind next morning! This time it bore them to the north-west. Some crows were seen flying about, and on the horizon a flock of vultures, who, luckily, did not approach. The sight of these birds led Joe to speak of the two balloons.

"Where should we have been with but one balloon? This second balloon is like a ship's long-boat; in case of shipwreck we had it to fall back on."

"Very true; but I don't like the long-boat so well as the ship."

"What do you mean?" asked Kennedy.

"That the new Victoria is not worth the old one. Whether the silk has been too much tried, or the gutta-percha melted by the heat of the spiral piping I don't know; but I detect a decided loss of gas. It is not very considerable yet, but is quite appreciable, for we have a tendency to descend, and to keep up to an elevation I have to expand the hydrogen more."

"The deuce! I don't see how you can remedy that."

"There is no remedy, Dick, and that is why I am pressing on, travelling even at night, and halting as little as possible."

"Have we far to go?" asked Joe.

"Where to? How can I tell you where chance may take us? All I can tell you is that Timbuctoo is still four hundred miles off to the west."

"When shall we get there?"

"Let me see; this is Sunday. If the wind holds we should be there on Tuesday night."

"Then," said Joe, pointing down to a long line of men and beasts, "we shall get there before that caravan."

The Doctor and Dick leant over and perceived a vast number of all sorts of beings. There were more than a hundred and fifty camels, which sometimes carry loads of five hundred pounds weight on their backs from Timbuctoo to Tafilet. The fee for this transport is about £5.

These camels of the Touaregs are the best in the world. They can go from three to seven days without drinking, and two days without eating. They are faster than horses, and show an intelligent obedience to the "khabir" or guide of the caravan; the natives call them "Me-hari."

Such were the details given by the Doctor whilst looking with his companions at the multitude of men, women, and children walking with difficulty over the half-moving sand, thinly sprinkled with thistles, parched grass, and withered bushes. The wind instantly effaced their steps, and this made Joe ask how the Arabs could find their way in the desert, and find the wells scattered over that vast solitude.

"The Arabs," said the Doctor, "have received from nature a wonderful instinct for knowing their way. Where an European would be utterly at fault they never hesitate. An insignificant stone, a little flint, a tuft of grass, or a different shade in the colour of the sand are sufficient to guide them. Then at night they have the stars. Their average rate of walking is two miles an hour, and as they

rest during the great heat of the day, you may guess how long it takes them to cross nine hundred miles of desert."

The "Victoria" soon left the caravan out of sight, and kept on her way all night. Next day, Monday, it poured with rain incessantly, which added greatly to the weight of the balloon and car, and kept the furnace at work. But this dreary rain explained the existence of the marshes and pools they now saw everywhere, as well as vegetation in the shape of mimosas, baobabs, and tamarinds. This was Sonray, a country covered at this place with villages of houses with sloping roofs, and surrounded by hills full of ravines and little lakes, where the pintado and the snipe found a home. Here and there an impetuous torrent poured across the track, which the natives crossed by going hand over hand on a band made fast to a tree on each side. Soon after came a land of forests, and that was succeeded by dense jungles, where alligators, hippopotami and rhinoceroses, revelled.

"We shall soon see the Niger," said the Doctor. "The country always changes as it nears great rivers. These waterways bring vegetation with them now, as they will one day bring civilisation. The Niger, in its course of two thousand five hundred miles, has on its banks the most important cities in Africa."

At mid-day they passed the little town of Gao,

once a thriving and busy city, and were over the Niger.

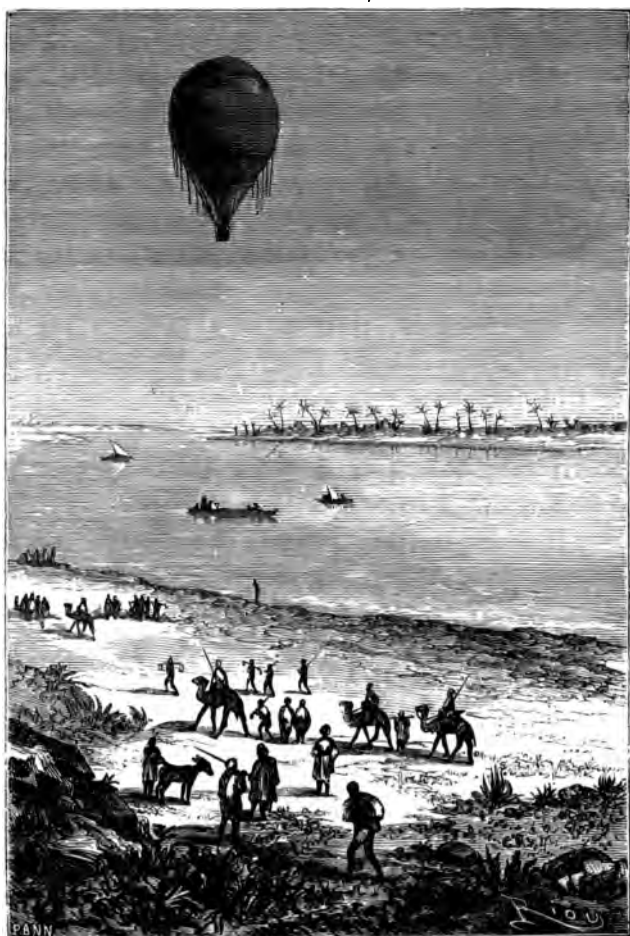
"There, there," said the Doctor, "is that famous river, the rival of the Nile, to which pagan superstition gave a celestial origin; and, like the Nile, it has been a puzzle to geographers since all time, and like it, too, has had a long list of victims sacrificed to its exploration."

The Niger flowed between its two banks with some degree of rapidity, and was even here of considerable width. But the "Victoria" was travelling too quickly for our travellers to do more than catch a glimpse of it.

"I was going to tell you about that river, and it is already far distant. Under the names of Dhiouleba, Mayo, Egghirreou, Quorra, and others, it runs through an immense extent of country, and challenges the Nile in length. These names all mean 'The River' in the different dialects of the people on its banks."

"Has the source of the Niger been discovered?"

"A long time ago. There have been numerous explorations of the Niger and its affluents. I can tell you the principal ones. From 1749 to 1758 Adamson explored the river and visited Goree; 1785 to 1788, Golberry examined the deserts of Senegambia, and pushed through to the country of the Moors, who assassinated Saugnier, Brisson, Adams, Riley, and many others. Then came Mungo Park. This Scotchman was sent out by



The Niger.

the African Society of London in 1795. He reached Bambarra, saw the Niger, travelled five hundred miles with a slave dealer, explored the river Gambia, and returned to England in 1797. He again started in January, 1805, and reached the Niger in August, having lost twenty-nine out of forty Europeans he had brought with him. His last letter was written in November, and it was ascertained from a native merchant that on the 23rd December his boat was overturned and he himself massacred by the natives."

"Did that put a stop to exploring?"

"On the contrary, Dick, for not only now was the river to be explored, but Park's papers were to be found. Two expeditions were sent,—that of Gray in 1816, and of Laing in 1822, and he it was who first reached the source of the Niger, where it was only two feet across."

"Easy to jump!" said Joe.

"Easy!" replied the Doctor;—"if tradition is to be believed, whoever tries to leap across it is instantly swallowed up, and an invisible hand pushes away any one who would draw water."

"I'm not obliged to believe that!"

"Not unless you like! Well, five years later, Laing made his way to Timbuctoo, where he was strangled by order of the sultan, because he would not become Mussulman."

"Another victim!" cried Dick.

"Two travellers besides Laing had got as far

as Timbuctoo; but Caillié was the only one who remained there long enough to be able to give any particulars of this Queen of the Desert: he was there in 1828. After him came Clapperton, who died at Sackatoo in the arms of his servant, Richard Lander, who, in another voyage of exploration, was shot by the natives. You see, then, that this country has had many brave explorers, whose only reward has been death."

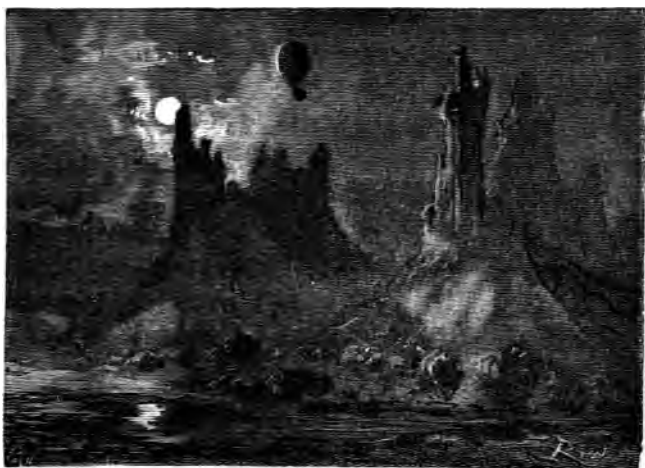
CHAPTER XXXII.

The Country of the Niger.—Singular Hills of Hombori.—Kabra.—
Timbuctoo.—Plan of the City.—Whither ?

DURING this ill-conditioned day, the Doctor gave his companions many other details of this singular continent, his annoyance, besides the rain, being increased by a strong north-east wind, which was driving them far from the latitude of Timbuctoo.

After flowing as far north as this city the Niger describes a large angle or elbow, and rushes on its course to the Atlantic, which it enters by a wide estuary; the country enclosed in this angle is of the most varied description; now of luxuriant fertility, again sterile and barren. Cultivated fields succeed arid plains; then come vast districts covered with furze, whilst the numerous water-courses and lakes are tenanted by all sorts of aquatic birds—pelicans, teal, and kingfishers. All this part of their voyage, our travellers passed every now and then a camp of Touaregs, who, seated under the shade of their haircloth tents, milked their camels, or smoked their pipes, whilst the women attended to the work inside.

At eight in the evening, two hundred miles to the west had been made, and a magnificent spectacle met their eyes. Some moonbeams struggling through a break in the clouds fell full upon the mountains of Hombori, whose basaltic crests reared their fantastic profiles against the background of lead-coloured sky;—they might have been taken for the legendary ruins of some vast mediæval



city,—such a sight as the icebergs of the frozen ocean present to the gaze of the Arctic mariner. About that time, however, a south-easterly wind took them in the direction which they wanted to go.

On the 20th, they passed over a perfect mesh-work of streams, torrents, and rivulets—all affluents of the Niger; the ground, being covered with a rich

grass, looked like an immense prairie. From this point, Barth started to descend the river to Timbuctoo.

Nearly five thousand feet across, the Niger here flowed between banks covered with passion-flowers and tamarind trees. Herds of gazelles bounded through the tall grass, from out of which the alligators watched them in silence. Long strings of asses and camels, loaded with the merchandise of Jenné, made their way under the lovely trees; and at a bend of the river, an amphitheatre of low houses, their terraces and roofs covered with the forage brought in from the surrounding country, burst suddenly on their sight.

"'Tis Kabra!" cried the Doctor joyfully. "'Tis the port of Timbuctoo; the city itself is only five miles off!"

At the end of two hours, the Queen of the Desert, the mysterious Timbuctoo, which had, like Athens and Rome, its schools of learned men, and its chairs of philosophy, was displayed beneath the eager eyes of the travellers.

The Doctor followed in all its details Barth's plan of the city and recognised its correctness. The city forms a vast triangle, situated in an immense plain of white sand. Nothing else surrounds it save some tufts of grass, dwarf mimosas, and stunted shrubs. From their bird's-eye view, Timbuctoo presented the appearance of great heaps of billiard-balls and dice; the houses, which con-

sist only of a ground floor, and line each side of the straight streets, are built of sunburnt bricks, or of straw and reeds; some conical, some square. The men were lounging on the roofs or terraces, armed with spears or muskets;—not a woman was to be seen.

“But they are said to be beautiful,” said the Doctor. “Out of the great number of mosques that once adorned the city, there are only left the three you see. How have the mighty fallen! Palaces, monuments—all are gone! The sheik is now but a tradesman, and the royal palace a shop!”

“I see what look like walls half pulled down,” said Kennedy.

“Yes; these were destroyed by the Foullannes in 1826. Before that, Timbuctoo was a third larger; but it has been, since the eleventh century, an object of general desire. It has successively belonged to the Touaregs, the Sonrayens, to Morocco, and to the Foullannes. And this great centre of civilization, where a learned man like Ahmed-Baba had in the sixteenth century a library of sixteen hundred manuscripts, is now nothing but a dépôt for the trade of central Africa.”

The city seemed given over to utter neglect. Large heaps of rubbish were seen in every quarter, and, with the little hillock on which was the market-place, formed the only inequalities of the surface.

As soon as the “Victoria” was perceived, a movement was observed; the drum was beaten;

but scarcely had the last philosopher left had time to observe this new phenomenon, for our travellers, driven back by the desert wind, again followed the course of the river, and Timbuctoo was only a recollection of their voyage.

"And now Heaven may conduct us where it will."

"Provided always that it is to be west," added Kennedy.

"I don't care whether we go right across to America or back to Zanzibar," said Joe; "one is as easy as the other."

"You must first be able."

"What should prevent us, sir?"

"Gas, my lad. Our buoyancy is very sensibly diminishing, and will want very careful management to get us to the west. I may even be obliged to throw out ballast; we are too heavy."

"We are still a long way from the end of our journey. Where do you think we shall light on the coast?"

"I should be very much bothered to answer you, Dick; but we may think ourselves lucky if we hit the coast between Sierra Leone and Portendick; and in any part of that country we are sure to find friends."

"I shall be only too happy to shake hands with any one I know; but meanwhile are we going in the right direction?"

"Not as much as we might, Dick. Look at the

compass; we are bearing to the south, and following up the Niger to its source."

That night the last of the ballast was thrown out, and though the furnace was kept at its hottest, it was all the Doctor could do to keep at a proper height. They were now sixty miles south of Timbuctoo, and promised to find themselves next day at Lake Debo.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Doctor harassed.—Still bearing South.—A Cloud of Locusts.—
View of Jenné; and of Sago.—The Wind changes.—Joe's Regret.

LARGE islands divided the river into several branches running with great rapidity. On some of these islands were some shepherds' huts, but so greatly had the speed of the "Victoria" increased that there was no time to look long at them. Still bearing to the south, they at last reached Lake Debo.

The Doctor sought in vain for another current of air, although he expanded the gas to its utmost, a manœuvre he was obliged to abandon, as it added to his loss of gas, which escaped all the more through the silk of the balloon. He said nothing, but he became very uneasy. The singular perverseness of the wind in driving them to the south upset his calculations; he knew not upon what to reckon. If he failed to reach an English or French colony what would be their fate amongst the savages who infested the Guinea coast? How was a ship to be found to take them home to England? And the actual direction of the wind was taking them towards the kingdom of Dahomey, amongst the

most savage of all these nations, at the mercy of a king who at public festivals slaughtered his human victims in thousands—it was death! Besides, the balloon was no longer so able to sustain them, and every hour became worse; but the weather clearing a little, he hoped the change might lead to a change of the air currents.

“This is pleasant,” said Joe, “and we are going to have it worse, if I may judge by the cloud that is coming.”

“Another cloud!” cried the Doctor.

“And a famous big fellow!” said Dick.

“I never saw such an one,” added Joe; “its edges are all drawn out in long lines.”

“I breathe again,” said the Doctor, putting down his glass. “It is not a cloud.”

“What then?”

“A swarm of locusts.”

“What, locusts?”

“Millions on millions of locusts pass over this country like a whirlwind; and woe to the place they alight—it is certain devastation to it.”

“I should like to see that.”

“Wait a little, Joe; in ten minutes we shall have reached this cloud, and you can see for yourself.”

The Doctor was right; this thick, dark cloud came on with a dull noise, casting its ominous shadow over the earth; it was an innumerable legion of that grasshopper family called locusts. At a hundred paces from the “Victoria,” they



The Cloud of Locusts.

alighted on a fresh and verdant country ; a quarter of an hour later the mass resumed its flight, and the travellers could then see at a distance the trees and bushes entirely stripped, and the meadows as if they had been mown. It looked as if winter had suddenly changed the whole face of the country.

“Their devastation must be worse than hail,” said Dick.

“And there is no way of avoiding them. Sometimes the inhabitants have set whole forests, and even hay-fields, on fire to prevent the flight of these insects ; but the first ranks falling into the flames at last extinguish them, and the rest of the swarm pass over. There is one sort of compensation—the natives gather immense numbers and eat them with pleasure.”

“They are the shrimps of the air,” said Joe. “I should like to taste them.”

Towards evening the country became marshy ; the forest had given place to solitary little clusters of trees ; and by the river-side were tobacco plantations and water meadows. On a large island they saw the town of Jenné, with its two-towered mosques, whence arose an abominable smell from the millions of swallows' nests accumulated around its walls ; baobabs, mimosas, and date trees were planted here and there ; and even at night the town seemed busy. Jenné is thoroughly commercial ; it supplies all the wants of Timbuctoo ; its boats by the river, and its caravans by shady

roads, carrying there all the products of its industry.

"If it would not have prolonged our voyage," said the Doctor, "I should have liked to descend here, where we would have been almost certain to find some Arab who had been in France or England, and to whom our means of travelling would not be unknown ; but that would not be prudent."

"Let us leave it till our next trip, sir," said Joe, laughing.

"Besides," added the Doctor, "the wind is veering to the east, and it won't do to lose such an opportunity."

The Doctor threw over many things no longer of any use—empty bottles, an old preserved-meat case, &c., and succeeded in keeping the "Victoria" in the current he desired.

At four the early beams of the sun shone on Sego, the capital of Bambarra, easily recognisable by the four towns which compose it, by its Moorish mosques, and by the ferry boats incessantly going to and fro with its inhabitants. They were now flying along too rapidly to see more, and as their direction was north-west the Doctor was not so uneasy.

"Two more days at this pace," said he, "and we shall reach the river Senegal."

"And be in a friendly country?"

"Not quite that perhaps; if the 'Victoria' fail us, we may be able to reach some of the French

establishments on the river, but if she hold out for another hundred miles or so, we shall reach the coast without fear or danger."

"And it will be over," said Joe. "I wonder if any one will believe us?"

"Who can tell, Joe? Thousands saw us start, and let us hope that thousands will see us arrive."

"In which case it would be difficult to say we had not crossed the continent."

"Ah! sir," said Joe, with a great sigh, "if I only had a big lump or two of the golden ore to show, people would then believe every word we say."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Nearing the Senegal.—Still descending.—Everything Overboard!—
The Marabout Al-Hadji.—A Trio of Travellers.—A Rival to
Mahomet.—A difficult Passage.—Kennedy's Guns.—Joe's Ma-
nœuvre.—Halt near a Forest.



AT nine in the morning of the 27th May the country presented itself under a new aspect, small hills running down the spurs of larger mountains, which were distinctly visible, and which had to be crossed, as they separated the basin of the Niger from that of the Senegal, and determined the course of the streams, to the Gulf of Guinea or to the Bay of Cape Verd.

The part of Africa where they now were is noted for its dangers. The Doctor knew from his precursors the privations they had suffered and the dangers they had run in the midst of barbarous negroes. In this country Mungo Park had lost most of his companions; and the Doctor decided not to land in it at all. But he had not a moment's rest, the "Victoria" sensibly lowered, and they had to throw over a crowd of objects, now useless, in order to get her over the crest of a mountain; and thus it went on for a hundred and twenty

miles, this new rock of Sisypheus always returning. The shape of the balloon had now become long and thin, and the wind made deep holes in the badly distended envelope.

Kennedy could not help the question—

“Is there a hole in it?”

“No; but the gutta-percha has been softened or melted by the heat, and the gas escapes through the silk.”

“How can we prevent it?”

“We must lighten it. Throw over everything we can throw.”

“But what?” said Dick, looking round the fast emptying car.

“We must get rid of the tent first; that is tolerably heavy.”

Joe sprang up to the circle where the network met, and holding on by the ropes, loosened the tent curtains and threw them over.

“There,” said he, “that will make a thousand niggers happy; there is clothing for as many, for they are very sparing of the stuff.”

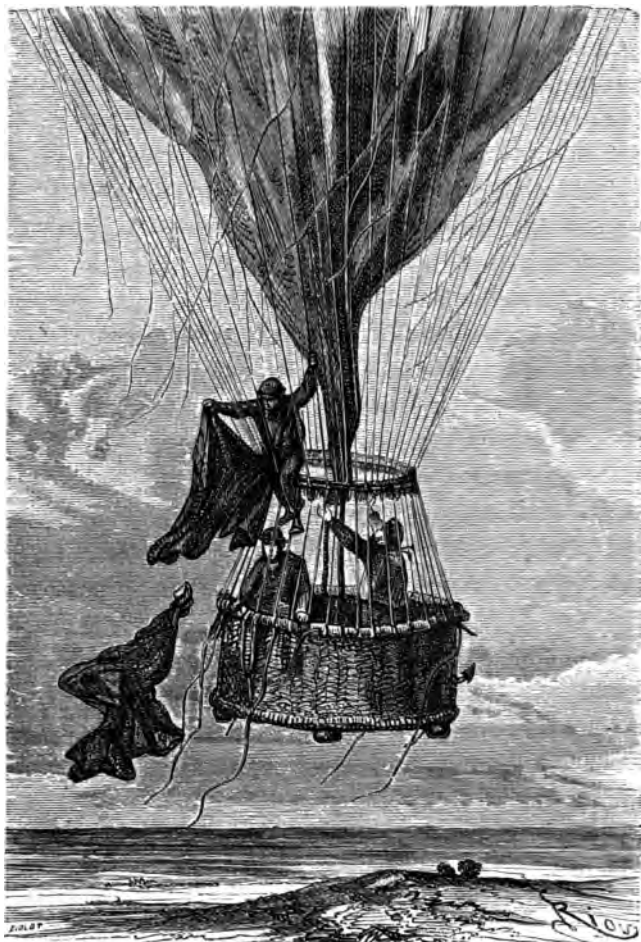
The balloon rose a little, but shortly after again approached the earth.

“Let’s get down,” said Dick, “and see if we can’t do something to the silk.”

“I tell you it is useless, Dick; we have nothing to mend it with.”

“Then what are we to do?”

“Sacrifice everything that is not absolutely in-



"The Tent must go!"

dispensable. At all costs, I wish to avoid landing in these parts; the forests, whose topmost branches we almost touch, are full of dangers."

"What? Lions? Hyenas?"

"Worse than that! Men! And the most cruel in all Africa."

"How do you know it?"

"By the accounts of former travellers. Since the French have colonised Senegal, they have continual trouble with all these natives, and in their explorations have found everywhere traces of war and pillage."

"How did that happen?"

"I will tell you. In 1854 a Foula marabout, Al-Hadji, stating himself to be missioned by Mahomet, roused all the tribes to war against the infidels; that is, the Europeans. He carried death and destruction over all the country between the Senegal and its affluent the Falémé. These hordes of fanatics, led by him, traversed the country, pillaging and massacring, and sparing neither village nor cabin; they even advanced as far as the town of Sego, which was threatened for some time. The French at last drove him beyond the Senegal into the country of Kaarta, where this villain, with his hordes of ruffians, now are, and I assure you it would be a very horrible fate to fall into their hands."

"We won't do that," cried Joe; "we will rather throw away our shoes to keep up the 'Victoria.'"

"We are not far from the river, but I foresee our balloon will not carry us over it."

"Let us get to the banks, at all events," said Dick; "that will be so much to the good."

"That we must try to manage; but one thing troubles me."

"What's that?"

"We have mountains to cross, and that will be difficult, as I cannot increase our buoyancy even if I raise the heat to its highest."

"Let us wait and see."

"Poor 'Victoria!'" said Joe. "I love her as a sailor does his ship; and it will break my heart to part from her."

"Be easy, Joe. If we leave her it will be because we can't help it. I only ask her to last twenty-four hours!"

"She is getting exhausted and thin; the life is going out of her," said Joe, looking up. "Poor balloon!"

"There are the mountains," cried Dick, pointing to the horizon.

"They are, indeed; and very lofty, too," said the Doctor, looking through his glass. "I don't see how we are to get over them."

"Can't we avoid them?"

"I fear not, Dick. Look at the space they cover, —half the horizon!"

"They seem to surround us, look either right or left!"

"We *must* get over them!"

"Empty our water-case; only leave enough for one day."

"Done, sir!"

"Are we rising?" asked Dick.

"Very little—not fifty feet; and that is not enough."

As they neared the mountains they seemed to tower above them, as if about to fall and crush them, and it was very clear that they must yet rise more than five hundred feet.

The water in the furnace was thrown out, reserving only a few pints—less than sufficient.

"We *must* get over them," repeated the Doctor.

"Let us throw over the cases, now they are empty," said Dick.

"Over with them!"

"It is sad to see everything going bit by bit," growled Joe.

"By-the-bye, Joe, no renewing of your devotion of the other day. Come what may, swear not to leave us!"

"Be easy, sir; we shall not quit each other."

The "Victoria" had risen another twenty feet, but the crest of the mountain still towered above her; a straight slope stopped abruptly at a wall of rock, which rose perpendicularly to the top of the peak, which was yet two hundred feet above them.

"In ten minutes the car will be smashed against those rocks, if we cannot surmount them!"

"Well, sir," said Joe, awaiting orders.

"Throw out everything in the way of provisions but the pemmican."

Fifty pounds weight was thrown over; the balloon rose a little, but not yet to a level with the mountain top. The situation was frightful! The "Victoria" was travelling with great speed; they felt they were about to be smashed to pieces! The effect of the shock would be awful! The Doctor looked round the car. It was almost empty!

"If necessary, Dick, hold yourself ready to sacrifice your arms."

"My guns!" cried the hunter.

"My friend, if I ask it, it is because we must."

"Oh! Samuel, Samuel!"

"Your guns, powder, and shot, may cost us our lives!"

"We are nearer and nearer!" cried Joe. "Thirty feet!"

Thirty feet still higher than the car rose the crest of the mountain!

Joe seized the rugs and threw them over. Dick silently sent his powder and lead after them. The balloon surmounted, and could pass that dangerous peak, but the car was yet below the level of the rocks, against which it must inevitably be dashed!

"Kennedy! Kennedy!" cried the Doctor, "over with your guns, or we are lost!"

"Wait! Mr. Dick; wait!" cried Joe. And Ken-

nedy, turning round, saw him disappear out of the car.

"Joe! Joe!" cried he.

"The unfortunate lad!" said the Doctor.

The crest of the mountain might have been twenty feet wide, and then, on the other side, was a slight declivity. The car just cleared the level, its bottom creaking over the rough stones lying loose on that fearful summit.

"We are clearing it! we are clearing it! we are over!" cried a voice which made the Doctor's heart bound.

The intrepid lad had kept his hands on the lower part of the car, running on foot over the crest of the mountain, and thus lightening the balloon of his weight. He was obliged to hold on with all his strength, and even then it very nearly escaped from him. When he reached the other side, and the abyss stared him in the face, by a vigorous effort and use of his wrist, he swung himself up and caught hold of the rope-work, and so rejoined his companions.

"Nothing difficult about that," said he.

"My brave Joe! my noble friend!" cried the Doctor.

"Oh, it wasn't for you this time, sir," laughed Joe; "it was for Mr. Dick's rifle. I owed him something after that affair with the Arabs, and I did not like to see him lose his gun."

Dick, unable to speak, shook Joe's hand as if he would tear it off.



A Perilous Feat.

The "Victoria" now had only to descend, which was easy for her, and came to her equilibrium at two hundred feet from the ground.

The whole country looked as if an earthquake had passed over it, and huge rocks, here and there, made the passage of the balloon very dangerous.

"Much as I would do to avoid it," said the Doctor, "we must find a place to halt."

"At last you decide on it!" said Dick.

"Because I have decided on a course to pursue; it is only six o'clock, and we shall have time. Throw out the anchors, Joe."

Joe obeyed, and the two anchors hung down from the car.

"We are close upon some large forest," said the Doctor, "and can make fast to some tree. On no account will I consent to spend the night on the ground."

"But can't we descend?"

"For what, Dick? I tell you it is dangerous to separate; besides, I want your assistance for a difficult work."

The anchors soon caught; the wind fell with the daylight, and the "Victoria" hovered motionless over a large forest of sycamores.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A generous Contest.—The last Sacrifice.—The Distilling Apparatus.
 —Midnight.—The Doctor's Watch.—Kennedy's Watch; he sleeps.—Fire!—Yells.—Out of Shot.



AN observation of the stars satisfied the Doctor as to his exact position. He was hardly twenty-five miles from the Senegal.

"The most we can do is to cross the river, but as there are neither boats nor bridge, we must, at all costs, do so in the balloon. To make that practicable, we must still further lighten the burden we carry."

"But I don't see how that can be done," said Dick, who dreaded the loss of his rifle. "At least one of us ought to decide upon sacrificing himself, and remaining behind, and as it is my turn, I claim that honour."

"Indeed!" cried Joe, "am I not used to——"

"I am not going to jump out, Joe, but to gain on foot the coast of Africa. I am a capital walker, and not a bad shot."

"I will never agree to it," cried Joe.

"Your generous contest is useless, my friends. I do not think we shall come to such an extremity;

besides, if we do, we shall still keep together, and cross the rest of the route together."

"First-rate, sir! A little walk would do us no harm."

"But, first of all, we are about to employ the last means of lightening our 'Victoria.'"

"What are they, I should like to know?"

"We must get rid of the furnace cases, the Bunsen's battery, and the spiral piping; there are there nearly nine hundred heavy pounds to drag through the air."

"But how will you then expand your gas?"

"Not at all, it must do as it is."

"Well, but——"

"Listen to me. I have calculated exactly what buoyancy we shall then have. It is sufficient to carry all three of us with the few things left. We shall hardly weigh five hundred pounds, including the two anchors, which I wish to keep."

"My dear Samuel, you are the most competent to judge. Tell us what to do, and we will do it."

"And here am I, sir."

"Then I tell you that we must sacrifice our apparatus."

"So be it!"

"To work!" cried Joe.

It was not easy work. There was all the apparatus to take apart, piece by piece. Overboard went the mixing case, the furnace case, and that in which the decomposition of water took place. It

required their united strength to separate these from the car, to which they had been strongly secured. But Kennedy was strong, Joe clever, and the Doctor ingenious, so in the end all the pieces were thrown over and disappeared, making large gaps in the foliage of the sycamores.

"The niggers will be rather astonished to find such things in the wood," said Joe. "I wonder will they make idols of them?"

The pipes attached to the valve of the balloon had next to be removed. This was difficult work; but Joe, with his feet bare so as not to fray the balloon, climbed by the netting to the summit, and succeeded in detaching the exterior screws, which allowed the pipes to be withdrawn, and the mouth of the balloon was then hermetically closed by a strong ligature. The "Victoria," lessened by this considerable weight, rose in the air, straining strongly at her anchor. At midnight all this work was happily ended. A supper of pemmican and cold grog was soon despatched, and Joe and Kennedy went to sleep.

"Lie down and sleep," said the Doctor. "I shall take the first watch, and at two I will call you, Dick. When Joe's watch is over at six, we will start, and Heaven grant it may be the last day of our travel."

The night was quiet, the moon sending an occasional gleam of light through the clouds. The Doctor kept his eyes on the thick carpet of leaves

beneath, which hid the ground from him, and listened attentively to the least groan of the branches of the forest. So near the end of his wonderful voyage, he felt nervous and fearful; it seemed as if the place at which he was to arrive was farther off than ever. He thought he heard sounds in the forest; fancying he saw sparks of fire, but an examination with his night glass showed nothing, and the darkness was profound. The Doctor thought it an hallucination, and when the time was up called Kennedy, advised him to be extremely vigilant, and, lying down beside Joe, was soon sound asleep.

Kennedy quietly lighted his pipe, rubbing his eyes, which he could with difficulty keep open. He sat down in a corner and began to smoke like a chimney, to drive away sleep. Silence the most absolute reigned around. A light wind gently rocked the car, inviting the hunter to the sleep which was fast overpowering him. He tried to resist it, opened his eyes several times and looked into the darkness, till at last, fairly done up, he slept.

How long had he slept? He could not say, but he was awoke by an unexpected crackling. He rubbed his eyes and rose; an intense heat struck his face. The forest was in flames!

"Fire! fire!" cried he, scarcely knowing what he was about.

"What is it?" asked the Doctor.

"Fire!" replied Joe. "But who could——"

A burst of loud yelling came from under the thick and burning foliage.

"The savages!" cried Joe. "They have set fire to the forest to make sure of burning us."



"The Talibas, the marabouts of Al Hadji, no doubt!" said the Doctor.

A circle of fire surrounded the "Victoria." The crackling of dead wood was mixed with the splutterings of green branches; the lianas and leaves,

all the living part of the vegetation, twisted about under the power of the destructive element. Nothing was to be seen but an ocean of flame. Enormous trunks of trees stood up blackly from the midst of the furnace, their branches on fire. And all this flame reflected in the clouds seemed to environ the travellers in a sphere of flame.

“Let us fly! To the ground! to the ground!” cried Kennedy. “It is our only chance of safety.”

But the Doctor stopped him with a firm grasp, and at the same moment severed the rope of the anchor. The flames, springing towards the balloon, already were licking her sides, when the “Victoria,” freed by the blow of the Doctor’s axe, rose a thousand feet in the air. Cries and yells resounded through the forest, accompanied by the reports of muskets. The balloon, catching a breeze which had arisen with daylight, bore away to the west. It was four in the morning.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Talibas.—Pursued.—A devastated Country.—Still, still descending.—The last Provisions.—The Rifle needed.—The Wind freshens.—The Senegal.—The Cataracts of Gouina.—Hot Air.—Across the River.

“**I**F we had not lightened her last night we should have been lost, beyond doubt,” said the Doctor; “and we are not yet out of danger.”

“What do you fear? The ‘Victoria’ cannot descend without your leave.”

“Cannot she? Look, Dick!”

The borders of the forest were just being passed, and they could see about thirty horsemen, clothed in loose trousers and floating burnouses, armed, some with spears, others with long muskets; and they followed on their quick and fiery horses the course of the “Victoria,” which travelled at a very moderate speed. At sight of the travellers they uttered savage cries, brandishing their arms. Rage and anger could be read in their sunburnt faces, rendered more ferocious by a thin but bristling beard, and they traversed with ease the plains and gentle slopes which led to the Senegal.

"It is indeed they! the cruel Talibas, the marabouts of Al-Hadji! I would rather be in the forest, at the mercy of wild beasts, than fall into the hands of these demons incarnate."

"I don't like the looks of them, I confess," said Dick.

"Luckily, the beggars can't fly; that's something," replied Joe.

"Look at these villages in ruins, these burnt huts; that is their work. Where fertile fields once smiled, all is devastation!"

"At all events, they can't reach us; and, with the river between us, we are safe."

"Right, Dick; but we must not get any lower," said the Doctor, with his eyes on the barometer.

"In any case, Joe, there is no harm in looking after our arms."

"It won't hurt us, Mr. Dick; and it is lucky we did not throw them away."

"My rifle!" cried the hunter. "I hope never to lose that!"

Kennedy loaded with great care, he had yet a sufficient supply of ammunition.

"How high are we?" said he.

"About seven hundred feet; but we can neither ascend nor descend, we are at the mercy of the balloon."

"What a nuisance! The wind, too, is only middling. If we could only meet a hurricane, like some we have had, these thieves would soon be

out of sight. If we were within shot, I'd empty their saddles for them one after another."

"Oh, yes! But then they would be within shot also, and the balls from their long muskets might tear the balloon. I leave you to guess what would be our fate."

The Talibas continued the chase all the morning. At eleven, our travellers had hardly made fifteen miles to the west.

The Doctor watched the slightest cloud on the horizon: he dreaded a change in the atmosphere. If they were blown back towards the Niger, what would become of them? Since they started, he reckoned that the balloon had lost more than three hundred feet; the Senegal was still a dozen miles off; and, at the rate they were progressing, it would take three hours to reach it. Fresh cries from the natives in pursuit arrested his attention, the Talibas were urging on their horses. The Doctor looked at the barometer: the cause of the cries was explained.

"We are descending?" asked Dick.

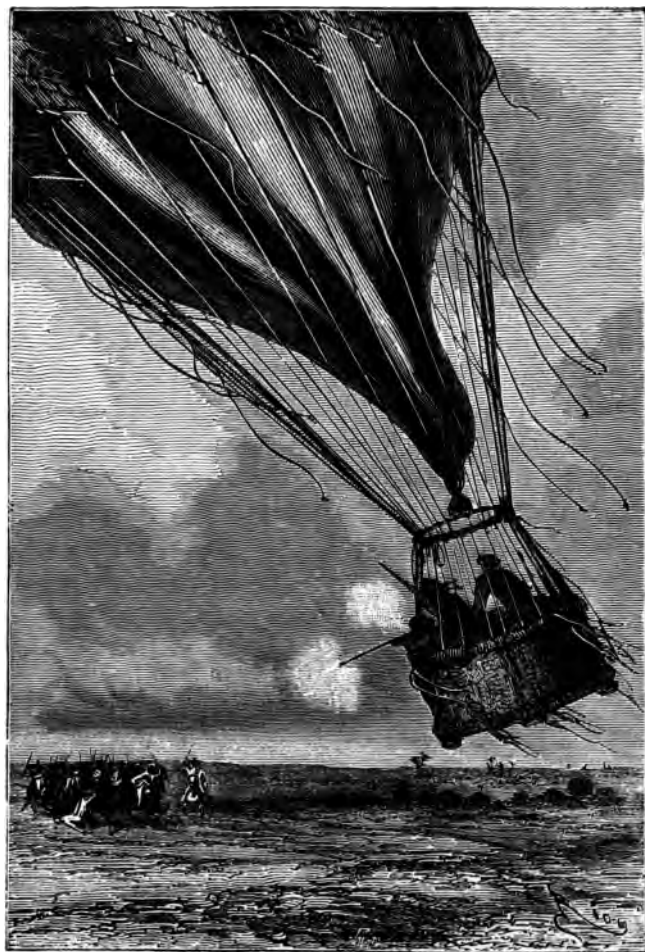
"Yes!"

"The devil!" thought Joe.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the car was only a hundred and fifty feet from the ground, but the wind was stronger.

The Talibas pressed their horses, and very soon a volley of muskets rang through the air.

"Too far off, you fools," cried Joe. "I think we had better keep these gentry at a distance."



Checking the Pursuit.

Sighting one of the most advanced horsemen, he fired, and the Taliba fell to the earth; his companions halted, and the "Victoria" gained on them.

"They are prudent," said Dick.

"Because they make sure of taking us, and they will, if we descend again. We must get rid of something."

"What's to throw?" said Joe, looking round the car.

"The rest of the pemmican—that will lighten us thirty pounds."

"There it goes!" cried Joe.

The car, which almost touched the ground, rose again in the midst of shouts from the Talibas; but half an hour later, it descended with great rapidity, the gas escaping rapidly through the pores of the silk. Very shortly the car touched the ground; the negroes of Al-Hadji rushed towards it; but, as happens in such circumstances, hardly had it touched when it rebounded to descend again a mile farther on.

"We shall not escape them," said Kennedy with anger.

"Throw over our reserve of brandy, Joe, our instruments—everything that weighs anything—our last anchor, if we must."

Joe detached the barometers, the thermometers—all, but without effect; the balloon, which rose for an instant, again touched the earth.

The Talibas galloped on their track, and were not more than two hundred paces distant.

“Throw out the two guns!”

“Not till they are discharged, at least!” cried Dick. And four successive shots emptied as many saddles, amid the yells of the Talibas.

Again the “Victoria” rose, making bounds of enormous length, like a great elastic ball rebounding from the ground. A strange sight, indeed—these unfortunate travellers attempting to escape by gigantic leaps, and seeming, like Antæus, to derive fresh vigour every time they touched the earth. But such a state of things must end.

It was mid-day. The “Victoria,” exhausted and empty, could not last much longer, the very folds of the balloon sounded as they rubbed together like the gnashing of teeth in despair.

“It is all over with us,” said Dick, “we must fall!”

Joe looked at his master.

“No,” said he; “there are still a hundred and fifty pounds to get rid of.”

“What?” asked Kennedy, thinking the Doctor had gone mad.

“The car! Up to the network; we can hold on by the meshes till we reach the river! Quick! Quick!”

And these determined men did not hesitate to try that last means of safety. They held on by the network as the Doctor had suggested, and Joe cut

the ropes attaching the car, which fell, just as the balloon was about to strike for the last time.

"Hurrah!" cried Joe, as the balloon rose three hundred feet in the air.

The Talibas lashed their horses, which galloped at their greatest speed; but the "Victoria," meeting with a stronger wind, left them, and blew rapidly away towards a hill, which barred the way for horsemen to the westward. This was a fortunate circumstance for our travellers, as they were now able to surmount this hill, and the Talibas had to ride round it, by the route to the northward.

The three friends held on to the net; they had tied it together under them, and it made a sort of floating bag-net. Suddenly, just as the hill was crossed, the Doctor cried,—

"The river!—the river! The Senegal!"

Two miles off, in fact, the river rolled on its course—a broad and rapid stream; the opposite bank, low and fertile, offered an easy place to descend.

"Another quarter of an hour," cried the Doctor, "and we are saved!"

But it was not so to be; the empty balloon fell nearer and nearer to the ground, where there was but a scanty vegetation, long plains covered with scattered rocks, a few bushes here and there, and a thick grass, quite dried up under the ardent African sun.

The "Victoria" several times touched and rose

again, its bounds diminishing in height and length, till at last its upper part caught in the lofty branches of a baobab—the sole tree visible in this desert country.

“All is over,” said Dick, “and at a hundred steps from the river!”

The three unfortunate men landed, and the Doctor dragged his two companions towards the Senegal. At this place, the river made a loud roaring sound, and on reaching its banks the Doctor recognised the falls of Gouina.

“Not a boat to be seen!—not a living being!”

With a width of two thousand feet, the Senegal here fell a hundred and fifty, with a deafening din. It ran from east to west, and the ridge of rocks which barred its course, ran north and south.

In the midst of the falls rose huge rocks of strange forms, like immense antediluvian animals petrified in the midst of the waters. There was no crossing! Kennedy could not restrain a gesture of despair, but the Doctor, with energetic boldness, cried—

“All is not finished!”

“I knew it well!” said Joe, whose confidence in his master was not in the least shaken.

The sight of the dry grass had inspired the Doctor with a bold idea. It was the sole chance of safety. He quickly led back his companions to the balloon.

“We are at least a quarter-of-an-hour ahead of these infernal thieves,” said he; “lose no time,

gather as much of that dry grass as you can. I shall want a hundred-weight of it at least."

"What to do with it?"

"I have no more gas; well, then, I shall cross that river with heated air!"

"Ah, Samuel, Samuel, truly you are a great man!"

Joe and Kennedy went to work, and soon a great haycock was raised near to the baobab.

Whilst they were thus engaged, the Doctor had cut away all the lower part of the balloon, including the safety-valve, and so enlarging the orifice. He then took care to expel the last of the hydrogen, and placing a quantity of dried grass under the orifice, set fire to it.

Little time is necessary to fill a balloon with hot air. A heat of a hundred and eighty degrees will suffice to decrease by half the weight of the air enclosed in it. The "Victoria," therefore, began to assume its original shape before the escape of the gas; grass was plentiful, the Doctor kept up a great fire, and the balloon was perceptibly growing larger and larger.

It was then three-quarters of an hour past twelve o'clock.

At this moment, two miles off to the north, the horde of Talibas made their appearance. Our travellers could hear their cries, and the galloping of their horses.

"In twenty minutes they will be here," said Kennedy.

"More grass, Joe! more grass! In ten minutes we shall be off!"

The "Victoria" was two-thirds inflated.

"Now, then, hold on all to the net as we did before," cried the Doctor.

"All right!" responded Kennedy.

At the end of ten minutes the balloon began to make efforts to rise; the Talibas were coming up, and were not five hundred paces off.

"Hold on!" cried the Doctor, and—

"All right!" answered Dick and Joe.

The Doctor pushed the last great heap of grass on to the fire with his foot, and the balloon, completely distended by this increase of temperature, rose at once, grazing the branches of the baobab.

"We are off!" cried Joe.

A general discharge of muskets replied to him, and one ball grazed his shoulder; but Kennedy, leaning forward, discharged his rifle with one hand, and there was one enemy the less. The yells and cries of rage from the Talibas were indescribable as they saw the "Victoria" rise to a height of eight hundred feet, when she caught a current of air, and swinging her passengers in violent oscillations, began to cross the river right over the cataract. Ten minutes afterwards, not a word having been spoken, the intrepid travellers began gradually to descend to the other side of the river. On that bank stood a group of ten men, startled and wonderstruck at the sight before them; they



The Cataracts of Gouina.

were evidently French soldiers. But the two officers in command, a naval lieutenant and a midshipman, knew of the Doctor's bold attempt from European newspapers, and at once explained matters. The balloon, gradually becoming empty, was rapidly falling with the three aeronauts holding on to the network, but it was very doubtful if it would reach the land. The Frenchmen rushed



into the river and caught the three Englishmen in their arms as the "Victoria" sank into the river several feet from the left bank of the Senegal.

"Doctor Fergusson!" cried the lieutenant.

"Himself," said the doctor gently, "and his two friends."

The Frenchmen bore the travellers to the shore, whilst the balloon, not half inflated, was carried

down by the current like a large ball to be engulfed with the waters of the river in the Cataract of Gouina.

"Poor 'Victoria!'" said Joe, sadly.

The three, deeply affected, watched the last moments of the balloon which had carried them so far and so well.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Conclusion, and Return to London.

THE French officers were in command of a party which had been sent by the Governor of Senegal to report on the advisability of establishing a fort at Gouina, and who thus had become witnesses of the Doctor's arrival.

"You will bear witness to the fact of our arrival?" the Doctor asked the French officer.

"With pleasure. But first come to the temporary shelter we have. You first want rest, food, and clothing; and, luckily, I can supply you with all."

Next day, all three arose refreshed, their troubles no longer thought of, and a regular account of their arrival was drawn up and signed by the officers and men of the French exploring party.

Supported by such irrefutable witnesses, the Doctor's voyage across Africa ended; for the native tribes amongst whom they now were, were on amicable terms with their French neighbours, and there was now nothing more to fear.

They had reached the Senegal on the 24th of

May, and on the 27th they arrived at Medina, which lies farther to the north.

The French colonists vied with each other in their efforts to do all they could for the brave men who had successfully accomplished such a perilous voyage; and a little steamer, the *Basilisk*, was placed at their orders to carry them down the river to the sea.

Fourteen days after, on the 10th of June, they arrived at Saint Louis, where they were kindly received by the Governor. They had then entirely recovered from their fatigue.

Joe spoke of their wonderful voyage as a "petty affair," and recommended all people who wanted excitement to avoid a voyage across Africa, as for his part he believed, if it had not been for the adventures of Lake Tchad and Senegal, he would have died of weariness and nothing to do.

An English frigate had just been ordered home, and the captain offered the Doctor and his companions a passage. They accepted his offer, and arrived at Portsmouth on the 25th of June. Next day they were at home at the Doctor's, in London.

We all know how grand a reception the Doctor received from the Royal Geographical Society, when he read the account of his aerial voyage, and how he was presented by the Society with its gold medal.

When that took place, Kennedy had reached his home in Scotland, with the famous rifle safe, as



The Journey Accomplished.

many a deer on his native mountains found to its cost.

As for the Doctor and his faithful Joe, they resumed their usual quiet mode of life, and though they had not ceased to be master and servant, they were, in the highest sense, friends.

THE END.



